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THE

1978

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

BY REV. HUBBARD WINSLOW, OF BOSTON,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG MAN'S AID," "DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY," "WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE," "SOCIAL AND CIVIL DUTIES," "ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN," ETC.

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DEDICATION.

To the people of his late pastoral charge in Bowdoin street, with whom he labored most happily in the gospel ministry twelve years, and for whom he will ever feel the deepest and most sacred affection, this volume is dedicated, with fervent prayer that the glorious truths which it attempts to illustrate may be their guide in life, their solace in affliction, their support in death, and their eternal inheritance on high, by their sincere and grateful friend,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

Most of the religious discussions of the present time relate mainly to external forms and developments. In our zeal for ecclesiastical matters, we are in some danger of omitting the more weighty matters of law and gospel. Not that the former are without their importance, but that their importance is secondary to the internal and more spiritual doctrines of the Christian religion. These doctrines are the basis of all true piety. No piety can be thoroughly right, that is not founded upon them; neither can any be essentially wrong, that *is* founded upon them,—whatever be the ecclesiastical organization.

The sovereign remedy for the evils that infest and threaten both church and state, is to be found in the vital doctrines of Christianity. Let these be allowed, from any cause, to pass out of the public mind, and in vain shall we "weary ourselves to find the way" to safety and repose. All experimental religion will soon be lost in the wild frenzies of fanaticism, on the one hand, and the cold formalities of infidelity, on the other; and both church and state will lose their chartered privileges and glories.

The cause of the evils which we suffer in our Zion and our country, at the present time, lies deeper than most imagine. It is the want of that intelligent, deep-toned, experimental piety, which results from early and intimate communion with the Christian doctrines. Let the minds of our children be brought under the power of these doctrines, and all our dearest interests will be ultimately saved;—let them fail of this, and all will be ultimately lost.

Without meaning to be querulous, or doubting the general progress of the world in wisdom and virtue, we ought to complain a little of the habits in which we are training our children. Much as they read, they do not *study*, as they ought, books of thorough elemental instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. Their feeble minds are overrun with ten thousand stories, and one phantom after another flits over their dawning imaginations, until every thing like distinct and well defined lines of instruction are nearly effaced. They read too much, and study and think too little. They read for the story, and not for the instruction; for the gratification, and not for the profit. If nine-tenths of the story-books were taken out of their hands, and books requiring to be *studied* were substituted, a most happy change would soon appear in the character of the rising mind. Not that all light and fancy reading should be dispensed with, but that it should bear a far less proportion to the whole, and be far more select.

Although the press is perpetually teeming with books, there yet seems to be wanting a comprehensive manual of religious instruction, neither so voluminous

as our tomes of learned theology on the one hand, nor yet a mere dry statement of doctrines on the other—a book at once exhibiting a faithful skeleton of Christian doctrines and clothing them with something of their appropriate flesh and life to render them effective. Such is the object of this little volume; and should it be realized, in any humble degree, the author will be laid under renewed obligation of gratitude.

These chapters were a series of discourses delivered on successive sabbath mornings in the Bowdoin-street Church, and are published precisely as they were delivered, only substituting chapter for discourse, and removing the text. As Christian truth is addressed to the heart as well as the intellect, it has been thought best, on the whole, to retain the language of appeal and impression somewhat peculiar to the pulpit, instead of reducing the sentiments to the more philosophical and less impressive style of the essay.

Every doctrine here maintained rests for its basis on no human speculations, but on the plain and obvious teachings of the Bible. This is not the place for refined philological disquisitions, much less for noticing the ingenious and forced renderings with which men have attempted to evade these doctrines. A book of instruction from God to men must be in the current language of men, so that the most natural and obvious meaning must be the *real* meaning. And such, appealing to enlightened common sense, is the import of those scriptures on which we rely for the proof of these doctrines.

The author was absent while a portion of the book was printed, and a few slight errors escaped the vigilance of the press: the most serious of which is page 343, third line from the top, where we should read *views* of sin, instead of *ruins* of sin.

The inspiration of the Scriptures and the Trinity of the Godhead are here assumed, having been discussed by the author in previous works. Hoping that this very humble and imperfect exhibition of very great and perfect truths may assist in guiding some souls into the way of life, the author, with great deference, and with unfeigned gratitude for the favorable reception of previous works, commits it to the Christian public.

H. W.

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CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THE value of our existence depends upon the existence of God. Unless there is a Being of infinite power and goodness on the throne of the universe, to sustain and bless us, we are mere shadows flitting by accident across the earth, and quickly vanishing away to nothing. *Is there a God?* How full of solemn and awful interest is this inquiry! The philosophical proof of the existence of God depends upon the validity of the axiom that every effect must have a cause. This axiom is an intuitive truth. It is as evident to a rational mind, without any process of reasoning, that an effect cannot take place without an adequate cause, as that the whole of a thing is more than half of it, or that equals added to equals make equal sums. It is the foundation of all the demonstrations of Bacon and of Newton in the moral and the natural world. It is also proved by our *experience.* Whether we direct our attention within or without us, we cannot detect a single change that takes place uncaused. All the movements of our *minds* are clearly referable to their

appropriate causes. We are conscious that we think, choose, refuse; we hence know that our thinking, choosing, refusing, is not uncaused, but caused or produced by ourselves. So in the world without us. We see changes continually going on in the material creation, and see that none of them come uncaused. So confirmed is this fact by the universal experience of mankind, that it has become an acknowledged principle in natural science, to which no exception has ever been known, that a body placed in any position will continue in that position forever, and that a body put in motion in any direction will continue in motion in that direction forever, unless some change be produced upon it by an extrinsic cause. Moreover, all mankind have ever acknowledged in fact, if not in words, the infallibility of this connection of cause and effect. Every rational man regulates his conduct on the assumption that results never come uncaused. Even the man who affects to deny the connection in question, is compelled to act just as though he believed it. And there is no hazard in the assertion that not an individual could subsist in life a single hour, without practically acknowledging it. It is then as certain as our existence, that every effect is produced by an adequate cause.

Come we now to examine some of the proofs, founded on this relation of cause and effect, of the existence of God. They are found in creation, the marks of design in creation, and our sense of moral obligation.

I. THE CREATION. All changes are effects. Hence the whole created universe is a storehouse of effects,

for it is replete with perpetual changes. Nothing is at rest. Throughout the three great kingdoms of nature, that of inert matter, that of vegetable life, and that of animal life, there is ceaseless activity. From the minutest atom that floats in the air, to the mightiest sphere that rolls in the skies; from the humblest plant, that springs up and dies in a season, to the forest oak, whose rise and decay demand the lapse of ages; from the growth and dissolution of the ephemeral insect's body, to that of him whose years are three score and ten;—the entire history of all these, is but a history of ceaseless changes. Now as all changes or effects are caused, there is no accounting philosophically for these facts, but by admitting that there is an infinite and eternal Cause. This great first Cause, so termed in the language of philosophy—the Creator of all things, himself uncreated; the primary and efficient Author of all changes, himself unchanging—is in the language of religion, termed GOD. This is that ETERNAL LIFE, before all time and all worlds, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made.

This is the only rational solution of the problem respecting the things that be; for there are but two possible alternatives. We must suppose that all effects are produced by causes which are themselves effects of antecedent causes, and they again the effects of causes preceding them, and so on ad infinitum; which is only removing the difficulty farther back, and not meeting it:—For after the mind has thus ascended through millions of alternate causes and effects, till

imagination is bewildered and lost in the ages of past eternity, as to solving the problem, it is exactly where it commenced; it has not made an atom of progress. Or we must admit that there is a great first Cause, which is in no sense an effect, but transcendent, self-existent, eternal, originating and sustaining all subordinate and dependent causes, and all the laws and movements of the universe.

If it be said that it is impossible for us to comprehend an eternal cause, so it is equally impossible for us to comprehend an eternal series of causes and effects. A finite being cannot of course comprehend what is infinite; the less cannot comprehend the greater. But in either case, eternal existence of *some* kind *must* be supposed, which is to a finite mind of necessity incomprehensible; and in the one case we do philosophically account for all effects in the universe, while in the other we do not. The believer does not profess to comprehend the existence of God. He sees at once, that from the very nature of God this must be impossible. But by freely admitting his existence, he does account philosophically for the universe, with all its multiform and glorious operations; while the unbeliever, by denying the existence of God on the ground of his incomprehensibility, accounts for nothing, and is after all compelled to admit that in his place which is equally incomprehensible.

We are thus under a necessity, from which escape is impossible, of either allowing the existence of an eternal Cause, or of denying the first axiom of all science, and asserting that effects take place uncaused.

But perhaps it may be said that this argument only proves the *existence* or an eternal cause, without proving that this cause is an *intelligent Being*. Let us then proceed to the next point, where the intelligence in question will more distinctly appear.

II. THE EVIDENCES OF DESIGN IN CREATION. By these we mean the evidences which objects afford, that they were *contrived* and *intended* to accomplish a *useful end*. Reasoning from effects to causes, objects designed prove the existence of a designer. It is thus that we prove the existence and powers of the *human* intellect; and in precisely the same way do we prove the intelligence of God.

Let us here refer to a single instance—the eye. That the eye was designed, by that Cause which made it, for the purpose of seeing, no reasonable mind can doubt. It is constructed on the philosophical principles of the telescope, and is a perfect specimen of mechanical contrivance. The rays of light received into the iris, passing through the chrystaline humor, gathered to a focal point, and diverging thence and painting an inverted image of the object emitting the rays on the optic nerve in the retina, are subjected to precisely the same process as in our best constructed telescopes. And there is, in reasoning from effects to causes, the very same evidence that the eye was designed and made for the purpose of viewing material objects—for maintaining intercourse between the kingdoms of mind and matter—that there is that a telescope was designed and made for this purpose. And it were no less ridiculous for a man, on seeing a nicely con-

structed telescope, to assert that it came by chance and was intended for nothing, than to assert that the eye came by chance and was intended for nothing. But if the eye has a designer and maker, that designer and maker certainly is not man; it is and must be a designing and all-powerful Being above us. Every person acquainted with the mechanism of the eye knows, that an essential variation or error in any of its numerous parts, would destroy the vision. Were the iris, or the chrystaline humor, or either of the other humors, or the optic nerve, or the retina, either wanting, or relatively larger or smaller, or differently situated, the eye could not see. Now to maintain that all this curious and wonderful mechanism could happen by chance, even in the case of a single eye, is irrational in the highest degree.

But the mere *construction* of the eye is only a part of our evidence. The right *location* of it is no less important to its purpose, than its right construction. Had our eyes been situated in our feet, or in any part of our limbs, or in the top or the back of our heads, they would have been entirely or nearly useless. They are in the best place possible to answer the purpose for which they were made. How clearly then do we see the same intelligent and designing Being who planned and framed the eye, engaged also in its location.

Now the same argument which we have drawn from the eye, may also be deduced from all the other organs and members of the body, taken both individually and collectively. The *teeth* and *tongue* were evidently designed for the purposes of articulation and mastication. But were they situated any where else excepting

in the mouth, they would be useless. Those curious instruments, the human teeth, so very useful and beautiful, when in their right place and order, what horrid deformities were they in any other conceivable position! Had the human hand been wanting in fingers, where would have been all the arts of civilized life? Indeed it is scarcely possible to conceive how our race could have subsisted.

An anatomical dissection and careful study of the human body must convince every reasonable person, that all of its numerous and complicated parts, both exterior and interior, were designed and arranged by an intelligent Mind. Not only is each a piece of wonderful mechanism in itself, but they all sustain such relations to each other, that were any one of them wanting, or differently situated, it would injure or render useless the rest.

That the Cause of the organization of the human body, after which we are now inquiring, cannot be a mere physical energy of attraction and repulsion inhering in matter—a blind, unknowing, undesigning *impulse*—for which the atheist contends, is thus manifestly impossible. By the most severe logical calculation of chances, it is certain that the chance for particles of matter, unguided by a designing mind, so to arrange themselves as to produce a single organized body, is not one in myriads. A row of figures as long as from here to India, would not suffice to express it. There is, therefore, in the Power that forms the human body, not only a mysterious *energy* called *Life*, but that Life is invested with *intelligence*. How can you

doubt it, without claiming kindred with idiocy itself? But the organization of *one* body, is only the *beginning* of evidence. Consider the eight hundred millions of such now on the earth, and the multitudes that have come and gone in past ages. If then we enter the kingdom of the brute creation, we have another world of similar testimony. If we pass on to the vegetable, we find another. If we proceed to consider the appositeness of the relative parts of the universe ; the adaptation of the sexes to each other, in all the animal and vegetable creation, and the due proportion of their numbers ; the fitness of each animal and vegetable to its element and use ; the mutual correlativeness of the animal and vegetable creations, which natural history and chemistry disclose—the manifestations of an infinite, intelligent, all-designing Mind, open upon us without end. If then we enlarge our vision, and in the light of scientific astronomy contemplate the mutual relations of the suns, planets, and satellites, which in every direction seem to throng the vast amplitude of space ; if we observe the perfection with which they maintain their relative positions and revolutions, where a slight deviation would bring universal ruin, as they whirl and roll round in silent and majestic order through the skies—we realize far more than the beautiful illusion of pagan mythology, respecting the music of the spheres ;—they do indeed, as the royal minstrel has sung, pour forth a perpetual chorus of praise to their Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his skilful work ; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth

knowledge."* Although they have no speech, no audible voice, yet has their instruction gone forth into all the earth, the voice of their melodies to the ends of the world, and every man beneath the skies may hear them,

> "Forever singing as they shine,
> The hand that made us is divine."

Thus all creation proclaims its God. As Dr. John Mason Good has eloquently said—"Ever present, though never seen; immutable, incorporeal, ineffable; the radiating fountain of all possible perfections; ever active, but ever at rest; ever present, though never seen; the source of all matter, of all mind, of all existence, and of all modes of existence. Whatever we behold, speaks of God. All nature is his awful temple; all science the portico that opens to it; and the chief duty of philosophy is to conduct us to his altar; to render all our attainments, which are the bounteous afflations of his spirit, subservient to his glory, and to engraven on the tablet of our hearts this great accordant motto of all natural and all revealed religion, of Athens and of Antioch, of Aratus and of St. Paul. In him we live and move and have our being." It was indeed a profound reflection of one of the profoundest of minds, that of Lord Bacon, in which he said he "could more easily believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without an intelligent and designing Mind." The existence of an

* Psalm xix.

almighty and intelligent Being, the Creator and Disposer of all things, is thus clearly demonstrated; and the demonstration may be carried to the highest conceivable point of certainty, for there is no end to these proofs. But there is another source of proof, from which it more fully appears that there is not only a God of infinite power and intelligence, but that he is a being of a moral nature, and has a choice in regard to our conduct. To this let us briefly revert.

III. OUR SENSE OF MORAL OBLIGATION. A sense of accountability is co-eval and co-extensive with our race. Appealing directly to the consciousness of every person, we have the acknowledgment of a susceptibility to the distinction between moral good and evil, between right and wrong conduct, and to an obligation to do the one and avoid the other. This evinces not only *intelligent* design, but *moral* design, in the Being who made us. The fact in question is testified in the experience, literature, traditions, laws and religions, of all nations and ages. Such is the image of God in man, such the constitution of every human soul, that no man can doubt, not only the existence of a God, but of a *righteous* God, to whom he is amenable, without first doing violence to his own moral nature. This is in many respects our most important source of proof; for it is our relation to God as *accountable* beings, with which we are mainly concerned. Moreover, this is the kind of proof on which multitudes, from their inability or lack of means to explore the testimonies of natural science, place their chief reliance. There is also a trial and test of character in the reception or

rejection of this evidence—in faith or unbelief—inasmuch as it determines whether a man is, or is not, disposed to throw off his obligation to do right.

The argument may be summarily expressed thus. Every man knows from his own consciousness, as surely as he knows his own existence, that he is susceptible to a distinction between right and wrong conduct. He knows, therefore, that such a distinction does exist. He knows that he himself ought to do good and not evil. Of course he is the subject of a moral law, written at least in his conscience, requiring the one and forbidding the other. He is then accountable for his conduct. The Being who created him, and who inserted in the constitution of his soul the sense of right and wrong, to commend the one and rebuke the other, prefers that he should conduct righteously. No inference can be more legitimate. In the appropriate use of his powers, no man can *reason* himself out of it, although in his folly he may *sin* himself out of it. Hence the sacred writer admits, that "the *fool* hath said in his heart, *No God.*" It is not until a man has foolishly sinned away and effaced this moral evidence of the divine Being from his mind, that he can say in his heart, "No God." So abundant and overwhelming are the proofs, both without and within us, of the existence of a righteous God, to whom we are accountable for our conduct, that even the heathen are without excuse for not knowing and serving him. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the

things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, *so that they are without excuse.*"* Let nature speak in her own pure language, and her voice within us will unite with her voice without us, to proclaim the being and perfections of Him who made us. In the soul of him who has a natural and lively sensibility to moral obligations, whose conscience is pure and active, and whose conduct corresponds with his sense of duty, the evidence of the Divine Existence is as real as that of his own. Whether he direct his observation to creation within or creation without, to worlds of mind or worlds of matter, above, below, around him, in every direction he beholds the bright and living image of the glorious God. In the soundest convictions of his understanding, as well as in the deepest inspirations of his spirit, he can say with the poet—

"Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from thee.
Where'er we turn thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are thine."

On this great and glorious BEING we continually depend. His smile is life; his frown is death. Having distinguished us from all other creatures upon earth, by investing us with a rational, accountable, and immortal nature, he has a supreme and perpetual claim upon our gratitude and love. If we do not like to retain him in our knowledge, if we deny his existence, forsake his law, and despise his grace, we shall be abandoned to

* Romans i 20.

the woes of a reprobate mind. The picture drawn by the great master of moral painting, is charged with colors too strong for time to efface, and too true to life not to be recognized as ever faithful to the original. To the present hour, it is as true of those who cast God from their minds, as when the picture was first drawn :—"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents; without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them."*

When men have debased themselves to this awful state of atheism, with its consequent and attendant vices, all that imparts value to existence is hastening to forsake them. The life of love and the love of life expire together. So soon as their worldly pleasures are exhausted, their very existence hangs as a burden upon them, and the chills of the second death seize fast and forever on their spirits. Corruption, gloom, and despair, take eternal possession of their souls. After a few short years of beastly and feverish existence upon earth, the grave opens to receive them; but

* Romans i. 28.

no smiling God there meets them, to conduct their spirits to the mansions of the blessed;—the dark and angry billows of wrath sweep them downward into a cheerless, lost, miserable eternity. Such is heaven's high decree. They who, amid the blazing lights of nature and of revelation, will foolishly live "without God in the world," *must perish!*

But if we love to retain God in our knowledge, if we faithfully receive and obey his instructions, he will indeed be our heavenly Father, and we shall be indeed his happy children. He will cause all our trials, sufferings, and afflictions, to work together for our good; he will deliver us from all gloom and every fear; he will guide us with his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory. Protected in the ark of his grace, we shall outride every storm; secure in the secret of his pavilion, we shall be saved from every foe. Nothing shall ever be able to harm us; nothing to separate us from his love. When the brief term of our earthly existence shall be ended, he will receive us to a higher and brighter world,—to his immediate presence, where is fulness of joy, and to his right hand, where are pleasures forevermore.

Immortal being, traveller to eternity, take the advice of a great and pious king to his son:—"Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a true heart, and a willing mind. For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, *he will cast thee off forever!*"

CHAPTER II.

NATURAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

HAVING proved that there is a God, we are prepared to consider his nature and attributes.

I. His NATURE. He is a *living Spirit.* So teach the sacred Scriptures, and all creation echoes their language. He is declared to be, by way of eminence, the "*living* God."* He has inherent life in himself, and is also the well-spring and source of all other life. "For as the Father hath *life in himself,* so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."† He "*quickeneth* all things;"‡—that is, all things that live receive their life from him. He is then, in the highest conceivable sense, a LIVING BEING. It is no small point gained, when we are fully persuaded that God is really *alive;* for our conceptions of him are prone to be very confused and feeble on this point. He is not only a living Being, but his life is of an order infinitely superior to that which we call *animal* life. His is not the derived and changing life of material and organized

* Heb. iii. 12. † John v. 26. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 13.

forms. "*God is a Spirit.*" (John iv. 24.) Now to a spiritual existence men are wont to attach a very meagre idea. To say that God is a Spirit, is with some minds tantamount to saying that he is a sort of mystical and vapory essence, of which little can be positively known and predicated. So sensual and gross are their conceptions, that were God presented to them as he was sometimes conceived in pagan fiction, as a stupendous and imposing form, sustaining the firmament, rolling on the sun in his path, guiding the stars in their courses, with shining robes and tresses flowing athwart and down the heavens, he would appear far more real and majestic than as he is presented in the Bible.

But consider for a moment, what constitutes the essential natural excellence of the *human* being, who was made in God's image. Not surely the mass of dull *earth*, which composes his body; nor yet the *animal* life, which pervades it. It is the intelligent *spirit*, that dwells there. Remove that spirit, which thinks, designs, wills, loves—which is capable of moral action, and of conscious happiness—and what remains but a few pounds of organized and animated earth? The glory has departed. Even brutes have conscious, and, in a humble degree, *intelligent* spirits; but the Scriptures inform us that they descend to the earth at death, that is, perish with their bodies.* They were made for a subordinate and transient end, and not, like *our* spirits, in the likeness of God's immortality. If

* Eccl. iii. 21.

then all that is essentially excellent in a human being is in his spirit, how truly may it be said of God, that his pure spirituality is the distinguishing glory of his nature.

A spirit is not material in any of the respects in which we define matter. We have therefore no senses with which to discern a spirit, or to experiment upon its nature. If we had, the curtain between this and the eternal world would be lifted; we should no longer walk by faith, but by sight. This would defeat the ends of probation. The curtain is therefore made fast, which conceals from us the world of spirits;—no mortal eyes may ever look within the veil. Hence an apostle said, "No man hath *seen* God at any time;"* and God himself said to Moses, "*There shall no man see me and live.*"†

But although we cannot *see* a spirit, we have as good evidence of its *existence* as we have of the existence of matter. Spirit is a real cause at work, but it is out of sight; whereas, matter has such a relation to the physical eye, as to render it visible. Each is known to us, however, by its effects; the former not less conclusively than the latter. If matter makes itself known to us as that which resists the touch, is attracted, repelled, &c., spirit makes itself known to us as that which thinks, wills, designs, &c.; and hence, when we look upon these marks of design in creation, we have evidence of the existence of the living and intelligent Spirit who produced them, as irresistible as

* John i. 18. † Exodus xxxiii. 20.

that of the material world. Moreover, as the power of thinking, willing, designing, is vastly superior to that of gravitation, attraction and repulsion, so spirit is in its nature vastly superior to inert matter.

God is not only a Spirit; he is an *infinite* Spirit. Here our minds labor to grasp the mightiest and most glorious of all conceivable objects—A LIVING AND INFINITE SPIRIT!

II. HIS ATTRIBUTES. If we cannot comprehend God—as surely we cannot, any more than we can throw upward our puny arms and embrace the sun—we are yet permitted to know something of his attributes. These are usually divided into two classes—natural and moral. Let us begin with the former. The analysis might be more or less extended, but they may be conveniently arranged under the following specifications:—

1. SELF-EXISTENCE. Himself the "Father of spirits,"* God is not indebted for his own existence; himself the "Fountain of life,"† he owes his own life to none. He exists in and of himself. This can be said of no other being. All other beings are *effects*, holding their existence at the will of another; God alone is a pure and infinite *Cause*. This truth he revealed to Moses, in those majestic words, "I AM THAT I AM."‡ These words forcibly signify, in the original, absolute and independent self-existence.

Hence the existence of God is *necessary*. As to created beings, they may exist or not, as the cause

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* Heb. xii. 9. † Ps. xxxvi. 9. ‡ Exod. iii. 14.

above them shall determine. It never was absolutely necessary that they should exist. God could exist without them, and it is only at his will that they have their existence. But as to God, it is impossible that he should not be, and always was so. Atheism is, therefore, of necessity, an eternal falsehood. Not only is atheism false, but it could not possibly have been made true. And finally, as God did not receive his existence from any source whatever, and does not hold it at the will of any being, so no gratitude, no praise, no homage, is due from him. These are virtues which pertain exclusively to *created* and *dependent* beings. The self-existence of God is an incommunicable attribute.

2. ETERNITY. This implies existence in every point of duration, both past and future. The existence of God is an eternal circle of ages, equally without beginning and without end.

Whatever has a beginning is an *effect*. Myriads of created beings are continually beginning to be. Our own existence has had a beginning. The same is evidently true of every organized substance on the globe, both in the vegetable and animal creation. Even this globe itself; these continents and islands, that bear such significant marks of age; these mountains, that lift their hoary heads to the skies; these seas and oceans, that have ceaselessly rolled on their deep beds for ages,—have all had a beginning. The same must be said of the numberless globes that surround us, performing their appointed circuits in the heavens. All these are *effects* of a previously existing cause. But

whatever is pure cause can have no beginning;—it must have existed from eternity. Hence just as certain as is the self-existence of God, is the fact that his existence has no beginning.

Equally certain it is that the existence of God must *continue* forever. For a thing to cease to be, that now is, is a *change*; but every change is an effect; and no effect can take place without a cause. Now there is no cause before God, or in God, or after God, that can annihilate his existence. There is none before him, for he is the First Cause of all things; there is none in him, for that were supposing the same thing in the same relation both cause and effect, which is absurd; there is none after him, for all created beings can sustain no other relation to the First Cause than that of effects. It follows then, irresistibly, that as God *has* existed from eternity, so he will *continue* to exist forever. The eternity of his existence is as necessary as his self-existence. It is not absolutely impossible, in the nature of the case, for any creature to cease to be; but for God to cease to be, is an absolute impossibility. Hence the Scriptures designate him as the "*eternal* God;"* and Moses in his prayer acknowledges the same sentiment, in language of great beauty and sublimity:—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, *even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.*"†

3. OMNIPOTENCE. By this is meant that there is no effect intrinsically possible for which the power of

* Deut. xxxiii. 27. † Ps. xc. 2.

God is insufficient. He is able to do all things. To say that he could not begin nor cease to exist, or that he cannot make the same to be and not to be, is no detraction from his omnipotence; for these are not effects to which power, however great, is relevant. Omnipotence is just as unable to make three and two ten, or the half equal to the whole, as is the feeblest infancy. "With God all things are possible;"* but these are not "things," they are *absurdities*.

In order to understand how God can be absolutely omnipotent over the universe, we must keep in mind that he is a pure Spirit. Were he material, he would of course be subject to the laws of matter. Instead of his giving laws to nature, she would give laws to him. A being ceases to be material, according to all our ideas and definitions of matter, the moment he ceases to be subject to the uniform modes of physical sequences. Seeing whatever is material is subject to the laws of attraction, gravitation, &c., we cannot conceive of almighty power over nature, excepting as it exists in a living Spirit. Spirit is then the source of all power. We have no evidence that matter has any power, not even that of obeying its own laws, excepting as it is energized by spirit. Hence the fact that God, and he alone, is an infinite Spirit, gives to him, and to him alone, almighty power over all nature. The omnipotence of God appears in *his creating and controlling the material universe*. The creation of the smallest mass of matter from nothing, is an astonishing

* Matt. xix. 26.

display of power. Indeed every mind instinctively feels, that nothing short of omnipotence is adequate to create even a particle of dust, or a drop of water. What then must that power be, which created the huge globe on which we tread, and all the globes in the heavens around us? It is computed that nearly a hundred millions of fixed suns might be seen with the strongest telescopes, and modern astronomy regards every one of these as a sun to a system of worlds. And all this is probably but the beginning of the entire creation—a mere drop in the ocean. How amazing then the Power that created the universe!

But the same energy that created the universe, is also requisite to *control* it. Our earth contains a mass of matter equal at least to two hundred millions of tons, and a power adequate to move it a single inch, were it fixed in a quiescent state, would be almost beyond the reach of numbers to express. But it is moved through space at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, or one hundred and forty times swifter than a cannon ball. The planet Jupiter is more than a thousand times larger than the earth, and is wheeled through the heavens with the velocity of twenty-nine thousand miles an hour, requiring of course a power to impel it, a hundred and fifty times greater than that required to move the earth.

Proceeding thus in our calculations respecting the movements of planets, satellites, suns, and systems, our minds rise in their contemplations to a bewildering and dizzy height;—we are for a moment ready to tremble, lest that ENERGY which sustains and controls all these

spheres should at some instant falter, and the universe fall into ruins. But then when we reflect again that this immense machinery of worlds has already been for ages sustained, impelled and guided, by the power of God—that nothing has ever appeared evincing in him the least symptom of weariness—our confidence returns, and we joyfully exclaim, "In the LORD JEHOVAH IS EVERLASTING STRENGTH."*

Not less signally does the omnipotence of God appear in the creation of the *moral* universe. It would seem that the creation of a rational soul implies a higher exercise of power, than the creation of matter. Not only is it the creation of something from nothing, but the forming of that mysterious essence into a most wonderful piece of spiritual mechanism. There are among the works of God many splendid exhibitions of material mechanism, but the finest of these is coarse compared with a rational mind. Observe its amazing power of easy and intense action; its rapid, delicate, and silent motions! What specimen of material mechanism can vie with it? It is made to act with undiminished vigor, ages after the mechanism of the body, in which it resides for a season, is worn out and destroyed.

The human soul is also invested with a power, which no material substance possesses in any degree—that of perceiving, thinking, choosing; that of acquiring knowledge, of forming character, of sustaining an accountable relation to the eternal throne of God. In this

* Isaiah xxvi. 4.

view, it can scarcely fail to appear that the creation of a single rational soul is really a more glorious display of power than the creation of a world.

Consider now that there are upon the earth more than eight hundred millions of such souls, and that one is conveyed into eternity, and another created in its place, every second. If then we ascend from this to other worlds, and contemplate the myriads of intelligent minds that rise in towering ranks above us towards the Supreme Intelligence—the armies of heaven, extending beyond the boldest flights of imagination—we are overwhelmed and lost in admiration of the power of HIM who is the CREATOR of all, and in whose "hand is the soul of every living thing."*

The same omnipotence is displayed in the *government* of the moral universe. Intelligent beings are governed in a great measure by *circumstances*; they hence demand a power to govern them, which has entire control over all the laws, movements and contingencies of both the physical and the spiritual creation. Being also free agents, they have the power of voluntary *resistance*, which matter has not; they therefore demand the exercise of a power to govern them, over and above that required to control matter. To secure their obedience, God puts forth all the direct power which he sees to be most wise, in the administration of a moral government; and in every instance where obedience is not the result, he exerts his power to confine and imprison the rebellion, saying to it in

* Job xii. 10.

accents of thunder, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."*

Such, then, is the power of God. He is omnipotent to create, and omnipotent to control. And it is striking to observe with what apparent *ease* every thing is done. All is silent, calm, gentle;—such is the "hiding of his power,"† that we scarcely know he is at work, ere the wonderful production stands forth in finished form and beauty before our eyes. This is the highest perfection of power;—imagination herself, with boldest wing, can rise to no higher conception. In the midst of such contemplations, the good man feels an instinctive emotion of wonder and joy, prompting the inspired exclamation, "Alleluia; for the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT reigneth."‡

4. OMNIPRESENCE. This implies that God is in every point of the universe, both of space and of matter, at the same moment and forever. This also is the exclusive attribute of a purely *spiritual* being. Matter is of necessity *local*;—it must occupy space. And it is a known law of matter, that the same or equal portions of it cannot occupy the same space, at the same time. Hence if God were material, he could not be strictly omnipresent; unless we admit the pantheistic notion that every thing is a part of God. But such is the relation of spirit to matter, that both may exist at the same time in the same identical place. The one does not displace the other. Hence God, being a pure Spirit, can people all space with physical

* Job xxxviii. 11. † Hab. iii. 4. ‡ Rev. xix. 6.

creations, and yet pervade the entire universe with his own Being. In the coral beds of the ocean; in the bowels of the mountains, and in the lowest parts of the earth; in the deep and dark caverns of hell, and in the flaming orbs of heaven; in all matter, as truly as in all space, is his all-pervading Spirit. He is thus "a God afar off"—in places remote from his throne—as well as "a God at hand"—in places near his throne;—he is always present to direct every incident in the universe, however minute.

The omnipresence of God is obvious, both in the light of nature and of revelation. The whole universe is a resplendent mirror, reflecting his image. It is intuitively certain, that wherever any thing is, there God is; since no agency can act where it is not, and no effect can exist without a cause. To say that God is present to every thing, is to say that he is omnipresent; since omnipresence is the being present to all things.

Some of the most sublime and beautiful language of the Bible is employed to set forth this attribute. "Am I a God *at hand*, and not a God *afar off*? saith the Lord."* Striking his harp to one of the finest strains of poetry that ever fell from inspired lips, David sang, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall

* Jeremiah xxiii. 23.

thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."*

> "Within thy circling power I stand,
> On every side I find thy hand;
> Awake—asleep—at home—abroad,
> I am surrounded still with God."

5. OMNISCIENCE. This attribute is closely allied to the preceding; still they are distinct. We can conceive of God's being *present* to every thing, without *seeing* it. But he *does* see every thing; and this is what we mean by his omniscience. It is not merely the *power* to see, it is the actual *seeing*. The omniscience of God is his intuitive perception of all objects and events in the universe. By virtue of his omnipresence as a Spirit, all things are in his eye. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."† He sees things, not through imperfect physical organs, which sometimes deceive, but directly with the eye of his all present mind. As matter is never in his way—no obstacle to his vision—he has as perfect a view of all our innermost thoughts, emotions and purposes, as of our outward actions. He has also, for the same reason, as distinct cognizance of the minutest atom and of the

* Ps. cxxxix. † Heb. iv. 13.

smallest incident, as of the rolling of a world and the rise and fall of an empire. Thus not a sparrow falls on the ground without his notice, and even the hairs of our head are all numbered.* It was under the glowing inspiration of this truth that the psalmist sung—"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."†

To many it seems incredible, that God can ever institute such a thorough and exact judgment over all the secret thoughts and purposes of our souls, as the Bible sets forth. That "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,"‡ presents to their minds so great a difficulty, that they incline to question the fact. But their difficulty results solely from thinking God such an one as themselves. Let them once fairly apprehend the great idea, that God is an *infinite Spirit*, and the difficulty all vanishes.

It has been a favorite theory with some deistical writers, that God sees great events, but that small ones, being unworthy of the attention of so exalted a Being, he does not deign to notice. They suppose that he

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* Matt. x. 29, 30. † Ps. xxxix. ‡ Eccl. xii. 14.

looks upon kings, noblemen, rulers, and men of learning, wealth, or of some other adventitious distinction; but as for the multitudes of the humble and obscure, they are beneath his attention. Miserable conception of God! Such as might well make a heathen blush. How grovelling must be his ideas, who does not know that the glory of God consists in regarding the least as well as the greatest of his works.

Great objects and events are made up of small ones; the ocean is composed of drops; the earth of atoms; kingdoms of individuals; and the ultimate destinies of a world, are the combined result of all its elementary parts and incidents. The deistical theory is therefore as unphilosophical, as it is unscriptural. Science and revelation unite to instruct us, that the Being who rules the destinies of the universe has the eye of his omniscience equally on all things, small and great, from atoms to worlds, and from worlds to systems of worlds; on all events, insignificant and illustrious, from the motions of an insect's wing to the revolution of a kingdom;—and finally, on all his accountable subjects, from the humblest peasant in his cottage to king "Solomon arrayed in all his glory"—observing not only their persons, but descending into every department of their souls, and tracing with perfect exactness the secret spring of every action.

6. Wisdom. This has been considered partly a natural and partly a moral attribute. The term wisdom is sometimes used in the Bible synonymous with *piety*; but in its primary sense, as applied to God, it designates a natural perfection. There is an important

distinction between wisdom and knowledge. The latter is the mind's *furniture*, the former is the mind's *guide*. A being may have much knowledge, with little wisdom. A lawyer may have a vast amount of legal knowledge, and yet for want of wisdom to use it to advantage fail of success in his profession. "Wisdom is profitable to *direct*;"* and as the wisdom of God is infinite, he is able to direct the affairs of the universe in the best possible manner.

The wisdom of God, like his being and all his other attributes, is underived and eternal. It is not the glory of the moon, shining with a borrowed lustre; it is the glory of the sun. It is the fountain of all other wisdom. He is hence called "God *only* wise"†—no other being in the universe being wise, either compared with him or without him.

Natural wisdom is nearly synonymous with discretion or judgment, as concerned in directing means in the best way to a desired result. Thus he is the wisest statesman, who can make the smallest means accomplish most for the public weal. He is the wisest merchant, who can turn his capital to the best account. He is the wisest laborer, who so directs his strength as best to effect his object.

The wisdom of God respects both the end and the means, and is concerned in directing his infinite resources of power and knowledge, so as to secure the best of all ends by the best of all means. The best of ends being chosen, the rule of wisdom is to bring

* Eccl. x. 10. † Rom. xvi. 27.

great things to pass by small means, to make a little accomplish much—frugality of means and prodigality of results. This manifestation of the wisdom of God appears, with amazing exuberance, in all his works. The inanimate creation it has so formed as to subserve, most perfectly, all the necessities of the higher creations. It first gives rise to the mineral creation, and this in turn sustains the vegetable, and this the animal, and this ministers to the rational and immortal soul. Every genus and every species in the vast vegetable kingdom, is precisely adapted to its element and its end. The same is true in the animal kingdom. The fish is formed with compact and pointed form, to plunge and sport in the water; the bird, with light and wide spread frame, so as to present a large surface with little weight, to soar into the air. Exchange the eye or the fin of the one for the corresponding member of the other, and neither would be fitted to its element. All animals are endowed with *instinct*—"a propensity prior to experience and independent of instruction"*—to supply the want of reason. The instinct of each is of the precise kind and degree required,—that of the beaver, to construct his dam; that of the bird, to build its nest and hatch and rear its young; that of the ant and squirrel, to provide for winter; and that of the bee, to construct the honey comb, on those profound principles of mathematics which taxed the intellect of Newton.

Thus nature moves on, in all her endless departments, with entire order, harmony, ease, under the guidance of a very few laws of astonishing simplicity

* Paily.

and comprehensiveness. Well might the psalmist exclaim, as he contemplated this subject—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in *wisdom* hast thou made them all."*

Still more illustrious, if possible, does the wisdom of God appear in the *moral* world. The laws of a human kingdom are scarcely comprised in a large library. After all, they leave numerous points untouched, and require constant changes and amendments. Whereas the laws by which God governs the entire moral universe, from lisping and trembling infancy up to the thrones and sceptres of angels, may be written upon the palm of your hand. And so perfect are they, that they require no change, no amendment, no repeal forever. The moral universe need but render perfect obedience to them, to be perfectly and forever blessed.

But the crowning manifestation of the wisdom of God is in his wonderful work of redemption. It is herein that the apostle says he "hath *abounded* toward us in *all* wisdom."† All conceivable wisdom here concentrates and overflows. It is here that through the manifold wisdom of God, "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."‡ It is here that his wisdom reconciles justice with mercy, the honor of the law with forgiveness, the majesty of holiness with the condescension of tenderness and love towards sinners. It is here that he meets the adversary on his own ground, takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, turns sin against sin, and

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* Ps. civ. 24. † Eph. i. 8. ‡ Ps. lxxxv. 10.

makes the wrath of man to praise him. "O the *depth* of the riches both of the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God!"* The wisdom of God is a shoreless ocean of light, in which immortal spirits will expatiate with growing wonder and joy forever.

7. UNCHANGEABLENESS. By the unchangeableness of God is meant, not that he does not vary and adapt his conduct to the obedience and to the sins of his creatures, and is not moved by their prayers, but that his being is immutably the same, and that he acts forever upon the same principles.

This attribute of God, like most others, results from his spirituality. The whole material universe, so far as we can explore it, is undergoing perpetual changes. Every visible form of matter is alternately decomposing and recombining, dying and living again. The purest metals are gradually converted into a calx or oxyde, the firmest crystals are resolved into granules, and the process of decomposition goes on, beyond the ken of mortal vision, till the elements reappear invested with other forms and faculties. Nothing material escapes the changes and ravages of time. Even the rocky mountain, resting so firmly on its deep and broad foundations, and towering in strength to heaven, must gradually bow its head and descend, fragment by fragment, to the plain. The stupendous pyramids of Egypt, which have withstood all the assaults of four thousand years, and perhaps of the deluge itself, are imperceptibly wasting, and, if left to themselves long enough, would in process of time utterly disappear.

* Romans xi. 33.

The change now going forward upon the earth on a comparatively small scale, is hereafter to be realized on a scale more grand and awful, when the entire globe itself shall be dissolved. The same change is in progress among the orbs of heaven. Within a single century, thirteen of the fixed stars have disappeared, under circumstances which admit of no other solution than that they, and the systems to which they ministered as suns, have perished from the families of worlds. What is thus befalling other systems, will in due time befall ours. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."*

> "The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temple, yea, the great globe itself,
> And all that it inhabit, must dissolve,
> And, like the baseless fabrick of a vision,
> Leave not a wreck behind."

But through all these vicissitudes of the material universe, we may look up to God, a pure unchanging Spirit upon the throne of his immortality. With what lustre and majesty has the inspired writer presented this truth.—"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. *They* shall perish, but THOU shalt endure."—And then, considering the material creation as his wardrobe, which he puts off when it becomes old, he adds, "Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;

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* 2 Peter iii. 10.

as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed, but THOU ART THE SAME, and thy years shall have no end."* We may indeed, in the light of revelation, anticipate the period when we shall be invested with imperishable bodies, but this will be only as they are spiritualized, and thus made to partake of the immutability of God's own immortal nature.

The unchangeableness of God comprehends his moral as well as his natural perfections. Created beings may grow or decline in excellence, but God, forever infinite, is forever the same. "I am the LORD, I CHANGE NOT,"† he says; and the apostle says, that in him there "is NO VARIABLENESS, neither SHADOW OF TURNING."‡

Such then is God, viewed in respect to his natural attributes. The view is overwhelming, and yet it is but a feeble glympse. How little do we see of the stupendous reality! We must after all exclaim with Zophar the Naamathite, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"||

We hence see that whenever we attempt to think of God, or to speak of his doings, or to approach him in worship, it should be with the profoundest reverence and humility. There can be no true religion, which is not eminently characterized by these virtues.

How solemn the thought, that you are now forming the relation of an everlasting friend or enemy of this

* Ps. cii. 25—27. † Mal. iii. 6. ‡ James i. 17. || Job xi. 7, 8.

glorious Being. The question pending on your probation is nothing less than this, whether you are to secure or forfeit an inheritance in these infinite attributes. To bring yourself by sin into the relation of confirmed hostility to God, must be the consummation of wo. His favor can be nothing less than an infinite blessing, his frown nothing less than an infinite calamity. Forfeit his favor, and you are surely *undone forever!* Who can bless, when he has ceased to bless you? Where can you find a friend, if you have not one in him? You see also the folly of resisting his will—of setting up an interest and plan in opposition to him. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth."* Submit yourself to him, fall cordially in with his plans, and secure his favor, identify all your interests and hopes with his glory, and you are *made for eternity.* All things are yours. Nothing can ever harm you. By the sure and mighty operation of these divine attributes, all things shall be made to work together for your good. Having God for your portion, earthly losses are nothing, pain is nothing, death is nothing;—even a martyr's flames are a bed of down. Amid the severest afflictions of life and conflicts with death, your heart shall sweetly sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."†—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; BUT GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART, AND MY PORTION FOREVER."‡

* Isaiah xlv. 9. † Ps. xxiii. 1. ‡ Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

CHAPTER III.

MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

We are next to consider the *moral* attributes of God. The distinction between his natural and moral attributes is this,—the former are *involuntary*, the latter *voluntary*. The former are necessary, the latter dependent on the divine will. The former pertain to the *nature* of God, the latter to his *character*. But when we speak of the character of God, we are not to suppose that it is, like human character, *acquired*. The character of God is as eternal and immutable as his nature. In this view we might apply the term nature or natural, indiscriminately, to all the divine attributes; and this is frequently done. But strict philosophical accuracy, and indeed popular convenience, requires us to distinguish them into natural and moral. God made a full developement of his moral attributes to Moses, in answer to his prayer—"I beseech thee shew me thy glory." The reply to him was, "I will make ALL MY GOODNESS pass before thee."* The word here translated *goodness*, signifies

* Exodus xxxiii. 18, 19.

in the original Hebrew, *riches*—all the riches of the divine character. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will in no wise clear the guilty."* Here the elements of the divine character—God's moral attributes—are declared to be mercy, grace, long-suffering, goodness, truth, forgiveness, and justice. The word here translated *goodness* is not in the original the same as the one thus translated above;—it has a specific meaning, and signifies *benignity*.

HOLINESS and BENEVOLENCE, as applied to God, are GENERIC terms. His very being itself, and all his attributes, both natural and moral, are holy. As predicated of his *natural* perfections, the term holiness designates venerableness, awfulness, majesty. It indicates Jehovah as a Being too exalted and glorious to be profanely spoken of, or rudely approached. As that is holy which is distinguished from whatever is secular and common, and is consecrated to religion, so God, eternally distinguished from and infinitely exalted above all other objects, himself at once the source and object of all religion, is eternally and infinitely holy.

As applied to his *moral* perfections, holiness indicates the perception of right, the entire rectitude of volition, and the activity of all his powers in a righteous manner. It was in this view of his character that the

* Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7.

prophet said, "Thou art of *purer eyes than to behold evil*, and *canst not look on iniquity*;"* that the psalmist said, "Thou art *not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee*;"†—that Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they *shall see God*;"‡—that the apostle said, "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, *with reverence and Godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire*;‖—and that God himself said, "*Ye shall be holy, for I the* LORD *your* GOD AM HOLY."§

It is in reference to the unequalled majesty and excellence of all his attributes, both natural and moral, as displayed in his works and in his government, that the heavenly hosts sing, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for THOU ONLY ART HOLY; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest;"¶—and that they sing again, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come."**

The *benevolence* of God, as well as his holiness, pervades and comprehends all his specific attributes. His mercy is benevolent mercy, his grace benevolent grace, his long-suffering benevolent long-suffering, his goodness benevolent goodness, his truth benevolent truth, his forgiveness benevolent forgiveness, and his justice benevolent justice. All these attributes may, in a creature, spring from sinful and selfish motives; but in God they originate in motives of infinite holiness and benevolence. Hence the same Scriptures which

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* Hab. i. 13. † Ps. v. 4. ‡ Matt. v. 8. ‖ Heb. xii. 28—29.
§ Lev. xi. 44. ¶ Rev. xv. 4. ** Rev. iv. 8.

predicate *holiness* of his entire being and attributes, declare also that "God is LOVE;"* thus making benevolence, as it exists in the holy God of heaven, not a specific and individual attribute, but an all-comprehending perfection of his being.

The benevolence of God is manifested in his having *so constituted all the faculties of our natures*, physical, intellectual, social, and moral, that when rightly used they yield us *unmingled happiness*. Whatever pain attends them results solely from their abuse, for which of course, creatures themselves are responsible. Another proof of the benevolence of God is in his *moral law*. The very essence of this law, is benevolence; the sum of its requirements is love;†—this proves that God delights in love, and would have the moral universe, like himself, perfectly benevolent.

But the greatest of all actual or even conceivable proofs of the benevolence of God, is in the gift of his Son for our redemption. Here is benevolence not only *willing* and *doing*, in the operations of nature and of law, but benevolence *sacrificing*, and that too in the greatest imaginable degree, for the welfare of others. This is the highest possible style of benevolence;—nothing can excel it, even in thought. Hence the Scriptures say, "HEREIN is love, not that we loved God, but that *he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*."‡ "God so *loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."‖

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* John iv. 16. † Matt. v. 43; xxii. 37. ‡ 1 John iv. 10. ‖ John iii. 16.

The holiness and benevolence of God, or what we may conveniently call his *holy benevolence*, being thus the sum of his character, we may regard all those specific attributes which he revealed to Moses, as ways or modes in which he is pleased to develope it, and bring it to bear upon the welfare of the universe. Thus his mercy is his holy benevolence tenderly directed towards the suffering guilty; his grace is benevolence engaged in reclaiming sinners; his long-suffering is benevolence extending the term of grace; his goodness is benevolence conferring various blessings; his truth is benevolence faithfully concerned in declaring nothing but what is strictly true; his forgiveness is benevolence bestowing pardon; and finally his justice is the same benevolence, guided by infinite wisdom, aiming at the highest welfare of the universe, by sustaining the authority of righteous laws.

Thus all the specific moral attributes of God are but radiations of an infinitely wise and holy benevolence, and in their source resolve themselves into it. As the seven elementary rays of solar light, when melted together in their natural proportions, constitute one perfect mass of dazzling brightness, as seen in the face of yonder sun, so these seven elementary moral perfections of God, uniting as they do in him, constitute a character of ineffable excellence and glory. Hence the character of God is the glorious moral SUN of the universe—the everlasting light and joy of all the righteous. The Scriptures teach us that "*the Lord God is a sun,*"* and that the unclouded lustre of his

* Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

character makes heaven an eternal day. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it. for the GLORY OF GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."*

We are now prepared to consider, more particularly, these seven attributes which God revealed to Moses, in which the glory of his character emanates upon the moral universe. Other analysis might be adopted, making the divine attributes more or less in number, and of course more or less specific, but as this analysis has been given us by God himself we cannot do better than to adopt it. This subject is of the highest importance to us, for in the moral attributes of God are found the origin and the principles of his moral government. They are the guardians of the universe.

1. MERCY. "The Lord God *merciful*."† Mercy, as we have said, is a tender regard to the suffering guilty. But it is important to distinguish here between a mere constitutional or instinctive impulse and moral principle. In the former there is no character. Thus the clemency which some brutes exercise towards their young, and towards each other, possesses no *moral* excellence, for it is an *instinct*, implanted in their nature by the Creator. The same disposition among men is sometimes called mercy. It is an amiable instinct, of much value in the constitution of the soul. Not only is it of itself destitute of moral principle, but, like all our other propensities, when not rightly controlled, it tends to the *destruction* of moral principle.

* Rev. xxi. 23. † Exodus xxxiv. 6.

When it is indulged at the expense of righteousness, as in the case of the parent withholding from his child needful chastisement, or gratifying him with enervating indulgencies; or when it induces the minister of Christ to compromise truth, and please the worldly and the selfish with the expectation that all will be happy at last; or when it so sways the breast of the judge on the bench, as to induce him to acquit the guilty;—in short, whenever it obtains the *mastery* of moral principle, and moves by a blind and self-gratifying impulse, so far from being mercy, as that attribute exists in God, it is weakness, it is sin, tending to the subversion of all true mercy, and to the utter ruin of its object.

Mercy, as it exists in God, is one of the elements of wise benevolence. It is divested of all human imperfections, and is purely a moral principle. It expresses the tender compassion of God towards the guilty and the suffering, his desire for the repentance and salvation of sinners; the yearnings of his heart towards the fallen, the needy, the wretched. This view of the divine mercy is sustained throughout the Scriptures.

2. GRACE. "The Lord God *gracious*." This attribute goes a degree beyond mercy. Mercy expresses tenderness and compassion, grace implies *positive favor conferred on the undeserving*. A gracious disposition is a disposition to bless enemies, to overcome evil with good, to subdue foes by kindness. It differs from mercy in this essential particular, it has no resemblance in any instinct. None of all the brute creation exhibit any thing like it; nor does it exist in

its genuine character amongst men, except as they are renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is one of the richest and most brilliant emanations of the divine character, especially as contemplated by man its object.

It was grace that rolled back the tempest of approaching wrath from the world, when seen from heaven lying in guilt and justly exposed to perdition;—it was grace that lit up the bow of hope on the face of the frowning sky;—it was grace that gave to mankind a Saviour;—it was grace that planted the church on the earth, and raised up a kingdom of redemption from the ruins of the apostacy;—it is grace that has sustained this kingdom, and has borne it along in safety from age to age, through the deluge, through fire, and through storms of persecution;—it is grace that gives the Holy Spirit in every instance of regeneration, and every degree of sanctification;—it is grace, sovereign, eternal, glorious grace, that originated, pursues, and will finally accomplish, the entire scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ.

"Grace first contrived a way
To save rebellious man;
And all its steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

Every man upon earth who is now any thing but an impenitent sinner, condemned by the law, must say with Paul, "By the GRACE OF GOD I am what I am;"*

* 1 Cor. xv 10.

and the headstone of Zion's temple will be laid at last, "with shoutings, GRACE, GRACE, unto it."*

3. LONG-SUFFERING. "The LORD GOD—long-suffering." This is grace protracted. It is the prolonged endurance of unyielding sin. It is grace that prevents the hand of justice from smiting the sinner dead, according to his strict deserts, the moment he sins; it is long-suffering that holds the hand of justice in *continued* arrest, still bearing with him and waiting to be gracious. It is grace that provides and offers salvation to men;—it is long-suffering that gives them weeks and months and often years to accept it. It was the long-suffering of God that waited on men in the days of Noah;† it was the same that subsequently bore with his highly favored but stiff-necked and revolting people;‡—it is with much long-suffering that God endures all "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;"‖—and it is only by virtue of the same, that any of us continue to live in a world of probation and hope.

But the long-suffering of God never degenerates into pusilanimity. Like all his other attributes, it is under the control of his infinite wisdom and holiness. There is a limit beyond which long-suffering towards sinners cannot go, but to the moral detriment of the universe; and beyond that, God will never extend it. This doctrine runs through the whole Bible, and is fundamental in a moral government.

There is probably no other divine attribute so much abused as this. "Because sentence against an evil

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* Zech. iv. 7. † 1 Pet. iii. 20. ‡ Num. xiv. 18. ‖ Rom. ix. 22.

work is not executed *speedily*, *therefore* the hearts of the children of men are *fully set in them to do evil.*"* This very forbearing disposition of God, which of all others ought most to melt sinners into penitence and gratitude, is made by many an occasion of scepticism. It is the gloomiest and most desperate feature of their depravity, that instead of improving the long-suffering of God by repentance, they despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God was designed to lead them to repentance. Thus, "after their hardness and impenitent heart, they treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: who will render to every man according to his deeds."†

4. GOODNESS. "The LORD, the LORD GOD—abundant in *goodness*." The term goodness is not here to be understood in its *general* and *comprehensive* import, for in this view it includes all the other divine attributes. Every attribute of God is good. The term is here to be taken, as the original Hebrew denotes, in the restricted sense of *benignity*—a kind and gracious regard to the well being and wants of his creatures. This is its usual sense in the Scriptures. To give to the same meaning with the terms expressive of kindred attributes, or to make it include all the other moral perfections of God, renders some of the most beautiful and impressive scriptures in which it occurs tautological and nonsense. Although the inspired writers

* Eccl. viii. 11. † Rom. ii. 4—6.

used language in a *popular* manner, they never used it in a *loose* and *unmeaning* manner. Every word with them has a meaning.

The goodness of God is seen in the care which he takes of his creatures. Of all the irrational tribes, from the feeblest insect and reptile up to the lord of the air and the monarch of the forest, not one is overlooked or forgotten.* According to their several incapacities to take care of themselves, does God make provision for them. His goodness is unceasingly engaged in protecting, sustaining, feeding, clothing, and providing for all their wants.

Nor does the law by which man is allowed to prey upon brutes, and they upon each other, militate against the divine goodness;—for aside from whatever is the effect of human sin and perversion, this law tends to the diminution of suffering and the increase of the aggregate of happiness. The brute creation thus enjoy all the pleasures of healthful and sportive existence, and then part with it without much of any pain. The whale, for instance, engorges some thousands of small fish at a single meal. These have enjoyed a happy existence; and now by an instantaneous entombment they make room for others, and escape the pains of sickness and death by the natural course.

Still more illustriously is the goodness of God seen in his care of the *rational* creation.† Not only does he provide for our *natural* wants, but also for all our social, domestic, intellectual, and moral wants. It is

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* Matt. vi. 26. Ps. cvii. 8.

great goodness in God that he deigns to *govern* us; since, if left to ourselves, mutual destruction and self-destruction would speedily ensue. He moreover governs us by laws, providential dealings, and various influences, the most select, benignant, kind, and effective to their end, of which it is possible to conceive. Imagination cannot picture a code of laws, or a providential government, including the dispensation of redemption and salvation, surpassing in goodness that chosen and employed by God.

The goodness of God is *spontaneous*. It is not produced or excited by any importunity from without. It springs fresh and direct from his own heart of infinite and everlasting benignity.*

The goodness of God is *disinterested*. Men are often good to their fellow men, from the expectation of something in return. The goodness of God neither seeks nor expects any reward; it aims simply and only at the good of its object.†

The goodness of God is *impartial*. Men have their favorites, God has none, irrespective of character. The prince and the peasant, the king in robes and the beggar in rags, are alike objects of his benignant regard. Even the evil and the unthankful are not neglected by his goodness, although he cannot have complacency in their conduct, and love them as he does the good and the thankful.‡

The goodness of God is *untiring*. Men often become wearied in doing good, especially if they meet

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* Ps. xxi. 3. † Rom. xi. 35, 36. ‡ Matt. v. 43—45.

with ingratitude and abuse. But God goes steadily forth, day after day and year after year, showering the gifts of his goodness alike on the righteous and the wicked, until it is clear that goodness will not lead the sinner to repentance, but only harden him in sin.*

The goodness of God is *abundant.* "The Lord God *abundant* in goodness." The goodness of God is a shoreless and fathomless sea—an infinite plenitude of benignity.

It was in this view that Christ said of the divine goodness, "There is NONE GOOD but one, that is GOD;"† and that the psalmist exclaimed with rhapsody, "Men shall *abundantly utter the memory of thy* GREAT GOODNESS."‡

5. TRUTH. "The LORD, the LORD GOD—abundant in *truth.*" Abstractly considered, truth is the reality of things, and as applied to language is a faithful declaration of facts. Considered as a moral attribute, it is a disposition to utter nothing but what is strictly true. That this attribute is essential to perfection of moral character, is allowed by the common consent of the civilized world. A being given to falsehood, is a being morally corrupt, beyond all question. A single falsehood in God, would fix a stain on his character which the ages of eternity could never wipe off.

The importance of truth as an element of the divine character, may be learned from its importance among men. No human government, no social compact, no

* 1 Chron. xvi. 34; Nahum i. 7, 8. † Matt. xix. 17. ‡ Ps. cxlv. 7.

community of interests of any kind, can be sustained without it. Even when outlaws are associated for purposes of evil, they cannot carry forward their plans without truth among themselves as a basis of action. Whenever any being swerves from truth, he is a practical enemy to the universe; for he acts upon a principle which goes to destroy all mutual confidence between intelligent minds. He would sunder the bond which holds the moral universe together.

Of what infinite moment, then, that this attribute of God should ever shine forth through all his kingdom with unclouded brilliancy. A single deviation from truth in God, would involve an evil beyond all finite powers to estimate. The confidence of every created mind in his government would be immediately and forever shaken. Myriads of ages hence they would know that once he swerved from the truth, and consequently might again; seeing there is no power above him to control him, or to which he is amenable. Some consider it too great a calamity to be supposed, that sinners should hereafter suffer the punishments threatened in the Bible; but that God should prove false to his word, would be an infinitely greater calamity.

Hence there is no attribute of which God is more jealous; none which he sets forth with more prominence, or guards with a more wakeful vigilance. It is impossible to commit a greater sin against God, than knowingly or maliciously to impeach his veracity. And even the doubting of his word—*unbelief*—is every where in the Scriptures put down in the fore front of all sin. God is often declared to be, by way of emi-

nence, the "*God of truth.*"* His word is also called "*Truth.*"† And Jesus Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,‡ styles himself, "*The Truth.*"

The truth of God is eternal, immutable, absolute; insomuch that we have only to ascertain what he has spoken, and it is the end of all doubt forever. If it relate to the past, what he asserts has as certainly taken place, if to the present, it as certainly now is, if to the future, it as certainly will be, *as God himself exists.* "Heaven and earth shall pass away," he says, "but MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."‖ The Scriptures even assert it to be "*impossible for God to lie;*"§ not that it is a *physical* impossibility, but a *moral* one.

6. FORGIVENESS. "The LORD, the LORD GOD—*forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*" The forgiveness of God is his disposition to pardon. This attribute is opposed to all resentment. In strict truth, the feeling of resentment never had any existence in the divine mind. It is incompatible with a perfect and changeless spirit of forgiveness. Whenever God does not actually forgive sinners, it is not from any deficiency in his disposition to forgive, but because there are obstacles in the way of exercising it. The just and humane judge upon the bench, has the spirit of forgiveness in his heart for criminals at the bar; but they sustain such relations to law, that he cannot in equity acquit them. It is not because he has feelings

* Ps. xxxi. 5. † John xvii. 17. ‡ Heb. i. 3.
‖ Mark xiii. 31; Luke xxi. 33. § Heb. vi. 18.

of revenge, that he sentences them to punishment, but because he must maintain the principles of righteousness and defend the public welfare. He is disposed to forgive, but *more* disposed to *do right.*

Such is the forgiveness of God, that the moment sinners comply with his proposed terms, and are thus found in a pardonable condition, he instantly blots out all their offences and remembers them no more forever. He treats them just as though they had never sinned. He knows no difference in his love, his complacence, his fellowship, his benefactions, between them and the angels that never fell.

This is truly a wonderful and glorious attribute. Men may forgive, but never like God. The forgiveness of men is stinted, measured, and marred with many unpleasant remembrances;—the forgiveness of God is without any limitation, sweeping the broad wand of oblivion over all the past, and knowing nothing in the future but perfect confidence and love. Hence his language is, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will *abundantly pardon.* For *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,* saith the Lord."* And again he says, "I, even I, am he that *blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins.*"† It was under the inspiration of this same truth that the psalmist said, "If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O

* Isaiah lv. 7, 8. † Isaiah xliii. 25.

Lord, who shall stand? But there is *forgiveness* with thee, that thou mayest be feared."*

7. JUSTICE. "The LORD, the LORD GOD—that *will by no means clear the guilty.*" This attribute is the pillar of God's throne. It was the last revealed to Moses, and stands at the bottom of the list; not because it is least important, but because it is the support of all the rest.

Justice, is giving to every one his due. Among men it is a practical conformity to principles of rectitude, in their dealings with each other. In God it is a practical conformity to the eternal principles of righteous retribution, in his conduct towards his accountable creatures. It of course respects both the dispensation of law and of gospel, under which mankind are placed. Regarding them as transgressors of law, it would punish them as violated law demands. Regarding them as despisers of gospel, it would punish them as despised gospel demands. Beholding beings perfectly obedient to the moral law, as it does myriads in heaven, it rewards them as obeyed law deserves. Beholding sinners in a world of probation and grace, repenting and receiving the gospel, it rewards them as obeyed gospel deserves. This divine attribute comes up in the rear of all the others, to finish what they have left unfinished. It is its office to "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness."† Mercy, grace, long-suffering, goodness, truth, forgiveness, go before, to do their part towards enforcing the claims of moral rectitude;—

* Ps. cxxx. 3, 4. † Rom. ix. 28.

justice always follows after them, to do what they have left undone, to make straight what they have left crooked, and to raise up an everlasting munition of righteousness. Thus that great developement which God made of his entire character to Moses, closes with the declaration that he "*will by no means clear the guilty.*"

Sometimes justice long delays, but she never fails to come at last. As her judicial work is a short and summary one, it can be put off for a long time. Mercy, grace, long-suffering, &c. are from their very nature more or less *protracted* in their operation; but justice can doom the sinner with the flash of an eye. As she does the final work, and fixes the sinner's destiny, she waits till all the other divine attributes have exhausted their commission. *Then she comes!* No hurry in her step, no passion in her eye, she moves calmly up with firm and determined brow, to pronounce the sentence that is never to be repealed. To the righteous she says, speaking by the lips of the final Judge, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* This is the final decision of Justice, to stand forever recorded on the tablets of eternity.

Thus have we analyzed the divine attributes into seven natural and seven moral. The number seven indicated perfection among the Jews, and it should not

* Matt. xxv. 34—41.

be esteemed fanciful in us to adopt the analysis which God himself gave. These attributes of God are signally marked principles or methods of his acting, but they may be variously commingled and diversified. Thus compassion, kindness, gentleness, are modifications of grace, mercy, and long-suffering. Like the seven prismatic colours of the rainbow, which so commingle as to form hues of endless modification and variety, in the process of melting together into a mass of perfect light, such are the attributes of God. We may often, in popular language, speak of other attributes than those here specified; but they are always to be understood as modifications or combinations of these.

A few concluding remarks. The moral power of God lies in the excellence of his character. He moves and controls *matter*, by the direct action of his *physical energy*; he moves and controls *minds*, by unfolding to them his *moral perfections*. These are his *imitable* perfections. We all ought to possess them. In heaven all *do* possess them—not in degree, but in kind. According to the measure of their capacity, all perfect beings possess and develope them just as God himself does. Nothing short of this satisfies the divine law—nothing short of this is perfection. "Be *ye* therefore *perfect*," said Christ, "*even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.*"* It is only this that can exalt the soul, which was made in God's image, to its true dignity and bliss.

* Matt. v. 48.

As the moral power of God consists in the excellence of his character, the more like God men become, in respect to character, the more moral power will they possess. Other kinds of power they may have by other means. They may exert a physical power over their fellow beings, by giant frames and iron muscles. They may exert a secular power, by riches, rank and office. They may exert an intellectual power, by high mental endowments and cultivation. But they can exert a *moral* power, only as they possess moral excellence. When a person is anxious for the salvation of his soul, he flies for help to the man in whose *piety* he has most confidence. It does not enter his mind to inquire whether the man have great physical strength and prowess, whether he be rich or high in rank, office, or mere intellectual attainments. These are to him of no consequence. His leading inquiry is, whether in respect to *character* the man is Godlike—whether he walks with God, has favor with God, and is seeking God's glory in the salvation of men. If such be indeed his character, his power over that anxious soul is next to omnipotent. What a motive this for high attainments in piety! Here we see what Christ meant by the "salt of the earth," and "the light of the world."*

It is of infinite moment that *all* the divine attributes be faithfully exhibited. Leave out any one of them, and the saving power of the others is destroyed. Exhibit nothing but justice, and you drive sinners to despair; nothing but long-suffering, and you encourage their

* Matt. v. 13, 14.

delay of repentance; nothing but grace, and you increase their presumption; nothing but mercy, and you embolden them in sin. It is therefore important that both law and gospel, penalty and grace, the thunder of impending justice and the soft subduing notes of compassion, should all be made to fall in their combined and harmonious action upon the soul. Leave out either of the divine attributes, or present it halting and feeble, and you are sure to write Ichabod upon the walls of the temple.

Sinners can be renewed and saved, only as they become reconciled to *all* the divine attributes. To be reconciled to the *mercy* of God, and not to his *justice*, implies no holiness of heart—no meetness for heaven. But because justice comes last in God's dealings with us—because the present is a scene of delayed justice, to give sinners space for repentance—great opportunity is afforded to preachers and to hearers to keep divine justice out of view, and thus banish from their religious faith the doctrine of the future perdition of the wicked. We would by no means advocate a mere poetic, imaginative, physical presentation of hell, more calculated to move the passions than to convict the conscience of guilt and moral danger. "The steady conviction that misery, intolerable, must be forever connected with rejecting the offered mercy of God, is the true impression produced by the declarations of the Bible on this matter; and this is a much more efficient and practically useful principle, than the terrors of an imagination, worked up by a picture of the secrets of that prison-house."*

* Erskine.

But let no sinner console himself with the expectation that the punishment of the wicked will be any the less intolerable, because of a moral nature. Whether it will be partly physical, or exclusively moral, we do not know; but this we know, that no judgments are like moral judgments, no calamities like moral calamities, no ruin like moral ruin, no misery like moral misery. Prisoner of hope! consider this—consider it well—consider it *now*. Ruin awaits the soul that will not consider it. Do not presume that because justice seems to come tardily, she will *never* come. Delaying judgments are but earnests of gathering indignation, if the space afforded for repentance be not improved. Let every man, as he would act wisely for eternity, firmly possess his mind of this truth. If he remain in sin, no surer will this day's sun go down and leave him in darkness, no surer will his hours roll on and bring him to the grave, than his day of grace will pass over, the sun of salvation will withdraw from him, and an eternal night of moral ruin and wo settle down on his lost spirit.

CHAPTER IV.

CREATION AND POWERS OF MAN.

THE Scriptures instruct us that the universe is not the work of *chance,* but of an *intelligent and almighty* BEING, whom we call GOD.* In opposition to the dark speculations of pagan philosophy, they inform us that matter has not self-existence—that this is an attribute which belongs only to God—and that all material things, as well as all living spirits, are dependent on his will. We are then to contemplate a period, in the past ages of eternity, when the material of this world, and of all the worlds around us, rose into being by the fiat of the Almighty. Not only did God create the material of the universe, but his own hands have *fashioned* it, and peopled it with endless tribes of living creatures.

When we first open our eyes upon the universe and attempt to study its nature and design, it seems a vast assemblage of strange, confused, inexplicable phenomena. What, whence, why, this creation?—this great

* Gen. i. 1.

globe of land and sea, teeming with an endless and confused variety of animate and inanimate objects?—yonder spacious canopy, sparkling with glittering hosts of stars by night, and blazing with the effulgent beams of the sun by day?—and in the midst of this stupendous scene, the little creature—*man*?—a being truly strange, even unto himself;—of the earth, and yet not of the earth—an animal, and yet more than an animal—a kin to worms, and yet a kin to angels—a frail child of corruption, and yet a proud heir of immortality.

But as we proceed to examine, darkness and chaos gradually give place to light and order;—we see in creation a beginning, a progress, a consummation, and more than all, a *design*, worthy of the great Author.

We are carried back in thought to the period, when this huge chaotic mass of matter—perhaps the ruins of a former economy—was moving along an eccentric track in the heavens, in wild and dark disorder; when the renovating energies of the Almighty awoke upon it; when "God said, Let there be light, and there was light;"—when he arched the blue firmament of heaven around it, divided the waters above from those beneath, and the waters beneath from the land; when he subsequently called into existence the vegetable kingdom, then the animal, and last of all man, in his own likeness.

The mineral kingdom, formed by the slow process of ages, is superior to a state of absolute chaos, inasmuch as it discovers organization, symmetry, beauty, and design. The vegetable kingdom is superior to the mineral; for it is endued with the properties of life, of

circulation, of nutrition, and of the generation and reproduction of its kind. The animal kingdom rises above the vegetable; for while it has all the properties of the vegetable, it has also intelligence, organs of sensation, capacity for happiness and misery, locomotion, instinct, and social affections. Here is a vast and varied kingdom, including all the finny tribes that cut the water, and pass through the paths of the sea; all the insect tribes, so called because they are insected or divided in the middle; all the families of the serpent, once the most beautiful and fascinating of animals, but now by all abhorred, and condemned to creep on the earth and lick the dust; the race of amphibious creatures, inhabiting both land and water, such as turtles, crocodiles, and the lizard tribes; and finally all quadrupeds, comprehending not less than eight hundred thousand species.

These animals are not doomed to till the earth for food, nor to toil and spin for their clothing. Their Creator provides them food, and wherever the climate demands it, supplies them with clothing. He dresses them gradually, as they require, in the autumn, and then gradually undresses them in the spring. Although they have perhaps been rendered more wild and destructive than they would otherwise have been, in consequence of the human fall, yet every kind of them is tameable, and has been tamed by man. We find among them intelligence, of a lower order, memory, instinct, will, natural affection, ingenuity, forethought, imitation, cunning, sagacity, the passion of love and revenge, and the susceptibility to a grateful attach-

ment and fidelity to those who have treated them kindly. In this last respect, the elephant, the horse, and the dog, have often put humanity to the blush.

We have no evidence, however, as I conceive, that any of the brute creation possess immortal souls. They are not morally accountable beings. It does not appear that they have any knowledge of God, of a moral government, of a future judgment, of Jesus Christ, of faith and repentance, of holiness of character, or that they are *capable* of knowing these things. So far then as we can see, they are *not moral beings*, and are of course incapable of religion. Moreover, they seem to be, as a race, incapable of any *intellectual progress*. While the human mind has been advancing, so that to us the boundaries of knowledge are vastly wider than they were to those of the early ages, it does not appear that the brute race has any more knowledge now than it had five thousand years ago.

Brutes are, however, a needed link in the great chain of being. The mineral kingdom is made to subserve the vegetable, the vegetable the animal, the animal the moral; and the moral is the connecting link, which attaches the present to another and higher world. Thus creation commences in the natural order at the lowest point, and rises by successive stages from chaos to order, from order to life, from life to conscious intelligence, and from this to the exalted endowments of moral and accountable beings—the only beings to survive the present state, to be the fruit of it, and by religion to ascend the scale of excellence forever.

Having thus ascertained the *location* of man, in the

scale of creation, let us proceed to a brief notice of those powers which distinguish him from the brutes that perish, and render him accountable to God. Man is the only being upon earth who was formed in the "image" of his Maker, and it is of some importance to us to know in what that image consists. The question now to be answered, is, What are those elements in man which render him, in distinction from all the brute creation, an accountable being?

1. A RATIONAL MIND. Brutes have intellect, of an inferior order, but none of those lofty powers of ratiocination which distinguish the human intellect. The human, in distinction from all brute mind, is enabled to *analyze* subjects into their elemental principles;—it can reverse the process, and resolve these into general laws. It can *classify* and *arrange*, so as to educe order from apparent confusion, and from one or two individuals of a species gain an introduction to a whole kingdom. Thus, by knowing a single operation of his own mind, a man is introduced to the similar operations of all *other* minds; the knowledge of a single plant, introduces him to all the other plants of the same species; the knowledge of a single animal, to all the animals of which that is a representative; the knowledge of a single solar system, to a universe of such systems; and the falling of a single apple, to the law which regulates the rolling of worlds.

The human mind has also, in distinction from brute mind, the power of *mathematical computation and measurement*, and also of apprehending *metaphysical* and *moral truths*. By this means, it is enabled to

shoot its vision far off—to go down into the depths of eternity—to dive into the dark mysteries of creation; to compute the relative magnitude and importance of objects; and to reason from causes and effects in ages past, to the same in ages coming. Those instances in which certain sagacious animals, such as dogs, monkeys, horses and elephants, have indicated something like mathematical and moral reasoning, are clearly referable to the tricks of imitation, produced by appeals to fear and other principles of the animal nature. Brutes can be made to perform many curious feats in *imitation* of what man does, but there is no evidence that they can *reason.* Their instinct may, in some particulars, approach near to reason, and supply its place, and human training may make them imitate it with amusing exactness; but there is not a shadow of evidence that any brute mind was ever enabled to comprehend and reason upon abstract truths. It is by the superior power of his rational mind that man holds the dominion over this lower creation. He is thereby enabled to apprehend those principles in nature, by which he can appropriate all other powers. By the exertion of his intellect, he is enabled to make all the laws of nature and all the strength of the brute creation to become as it were his own sinews and muscles.

2. Conscience. This may be defined *the power of distinguishing between actions as morally right or wrong,* together with a *susceptibility to pleasure or pain* from doing them. It is not the office of conscience to determine what *is* right or wrong, but to decide, when that point is ascertained, that we ought

to do the one and avoid the other, and to sting us with rebuke and reward us with a feeling of approbation, according as we obey or disobey its injunctions. Hence conscience is not a *guide*, but a *monitor*. The law of God is ever to be our guide; and a greater error is never committed, than when an unenlightened conscience is allowed to take the reins. It leads to superstition, idolatry, infanticide, and every species of abomination. As conscience is one of the most powerful and active principles in our nature, its agency is very positive for good or for evil. As there is no other power in man so effective as a well educated conscience to move him to do good, so he never goes wrong so desperately as when under the impulse of a conscience not properly enlightened.

Hence the early and careful education of the conscience, is among the most important of all duties. To suffer our conscience to grope in darkness, or to be blinded by prejudice, or to be seared and deadened by sin, is to become exposed to the greatest of human calamities. No judgments can surpass those denounced on the men who are recorded as "having their conscience seared with a hot iron,"* and as having "even their mind and conscience defiled."† On the other hand, to have "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,"‡ and to "have a good conscience in all things,"‖ is connected with the greatest of blessings.

While the conscience, like all our other faculties, is benefitted or injured by good or bad usage, it ultimately

* 1 Tim. iv. 2. † Tit. i. 15. ‡ Heb. x. 22. ‖ Heb. xiii. 18.

produces the very noblest or basest of characters; and no pleasures nor pangs are more exquisite than those resulting from the same source. Take care of your conscience! All the treasures of gold and of diamonds are without value compared with it.

3. MORAL WILL. As it is the office of conscience to recognize a distinction between right and wrong, so it is the office of the moral will to *choose* between them. Brute mind has the power of choice, but not of *moral* choice. The ox refuses to eat flesh, and chooses grass; but this he does merely from *instinct*. And so the infant, before his moral nature is developed, exercises the power of choice only from the same impulse. But when the eye of reason opens, and conscience becomes enlightened and active, then he begins to have the power of putting forth a *moral* choice. He can then choose or refuse to do what he knows to be morally right. He can obey or disobey the admonitions of his conscience. His will becomes invested with a fearful responsibility. He can, like Joshua, choose the service of God,* or like Ahab, sell himself to do evil.† We are now speaking of the moral will, as originally created by God. However disinclined by sin to choose the right, it is still the same responsible will as when first implanted in the souls of our progenitors. There is perhaps no distinction between the will of a brute and that of a human being, excepting that the latter acts upon a higher scale and is clothed with a moral responsibility. In the one case the will

* Josh. xxiv. 15. † 1 Kings xxi. 20.

moves by *instinct*, in the other by a sense of *duty*. Now as man ought ever to put forth his moral choice from the high sense of duty, and not from the lower impulses of his nature, he is just as much bound to choose morally right after he has by sin become disinclined to it, as he was before.

This view of the responsible will of man is sustained by our ablest metaphysicians. President Edwards says, "The faculty of the *Will*, is that power, or principle of mind, by which it is capable of *choosing*; an act of the *Will* is the same as an act of *choosing* or *choice*. If any think it a more perfect definition of the Will, to say that it is that by which the soul *chooses* or *refuses*, I am content with it." Nothing can be more important to man than the use he makes of his moral Will. On this is suspended, in a fearful sense, the amazing destinies of his soul for eternity. As every man chooses or refuses Christ for his Saviour, and the God of heaven for his portion, so must it fare with him forever.

4. MORAL AFFECTIONS. Some writers identify the affections with the will. Thus the writer above cited, in his able Treatise on the Affections, says, "The affections are no other than the more vigorous and *sensible exercises of the inclination and will* of the soul."—"The *will*, and the *affections* of the soul, are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere *actings* of the will and inclination, but only in the liveliness and sensibility of exercise."

But the very difference here admitted, is of some importance. The affections are the power of feeling a lively and sensible delight in the objects of our choice. Now a man may *choose*, from a mere sense of *duty*, what he has no sensible delight in. He may see it to be his duty to practice a self-denial, or to bear patiently an injury, or to engage in prayer, and therefore choose to do it, although he realizes little or no pleasure in it. His heart is not right, unless his affections are in a state to delight in that which his conscience approves; still, as the choice can exist without the feeling of delight, it seems proper to distinguish the one from the other. This distinction is the more important, as the one usually precedes the other in conversion. The natural order is, first, the enlightening of the mind with divine truth; secondly, the activity of conscience, urging the will to choose right; thirdly, the decision or choice of the will, in obedience to the demands of conscience; and fourthly, the transfer of the affections, and their quickening to a sensible delight in the object chosen. To wait until you sensibly delight in God, before you choose him for your portion: to wait until you sensibly delight in Christ, before you choose him for your Saviour; to wait until you sensibly delight in a self-denying duty, before you choose to perform it—is to put that first which nature has put last, and to subvert that fundamental precept of the Great Teacher, "If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself.*"* We

* Matt xvi. 24.

should choose to serve God, primarily, because it is *right—duty*—and for the same reason we should *love* to serve him. The affections are the imperishable fuel of the soul; their fires are to burn, for bliss or for wo, through everlasting ages.

5. IMMORTALITY. This is the crowning gift of the human soul, the most distinguishing glory of its nature. It imparts to it a value which no language can express, no figures compute. The spark of intelligence which you bear about in that bosom, which kindles in that eye, glows in that countenance, and by those lips gives utterance to its thoughts and emotions, is to survive the wastes of time;—its mysterious lights will blaze on high, when suns and stars shall have ceased to shine,—it will look down from its throne of immortality upon the tomb of worlds.

The argument for the immortality of the soul, is deduced by philosophers from its spirituality. If the soul is strictly spiritual, it is not subject to the laws of matter; of course the dissolution of the body cannot destroy it.

It is also deduced from the fact that man is now actually living in the future. The strongest yearnings of his spirit, are towards the future; not so much in the form of desire to exist, as, assuming that it shall exist, in solicitude respecting its destiny. The lively sensibility of men respecting their posthumous reputation could have no place, did they suppose death to be the annihilation of their conscious existence. A sentiment of immortality, is thus a natural instinct of the soul.

It is also deduced from the unequal distributions of justice in this world, the impunities of crime, and the oft afflictions and defeats of virtue, which cannot be reconciled with the existence of a righteous moral government on any other supposition, than that of a future scene of retributions corresponding to the present scene of trial. It is moreover deduced, with some plausibility, from the extraordinary independence of the body which the soul sometimes exhibits, as in the last moments of life, and especially in swoons and trances; when all the senses are locked up, as in the cold embrace of death, and every avenue of bodily communication with the world is closed. At such times, the soul has realized the most intense activity;—it has enjoyed the most glorious visions;—it has walked amidst the flowers of paradise;—it has gazed upon the splendors, and drank the melodies, of brighter worlds than this. Read for example the history of Mr. Tennant.

But the only *conclusive* proof of the soul's immortality, is furnished in the Scriptures. A state of everlasting rewards beyond the grave was revealed to the saints of the Old Testament, and it is expressly recorded, as a monument to their excellence, that from it they deduced the motives to regulate their conduct upon earth. "These all died *in faith, not having received the promises*, but having seen them *afar off*, and were *persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*"* They desired a *better* country, even an

* Heb. xi. 16.

heavenly, wherefore God was not ashamed to be called their God. Still more clearly was the immortality of the soul revealed by Jesus Christ, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."* It was in this light that the apostles labored and suffered reproach,† knowing that for them to live was Christ, and to die gain,‡ and ever desiring to depart and be with Christ, which was far better.‖ It is in the same light that all the truly good and noble of the earth, all the heroes and martyrs of the cross, all the friends of God and righteousness, have walked the narrow way to glory.

These, then, are the distinguishing prerogatives of the human soul—reason, conscience, moral will, moral affections, and immortality. They belong to none of all the brute creation; they are the *natural image* of God in man. They render us accountable beings.

God's *moral* image in the human soul, which was lost by the fall, consisted in its *holiness*—the entire devotion of all its powers to the divine glory. From the first moment of their existence, till they took the forbidden fruit, all the moral powers of our progenitors were in a state of perfect allegiance to the holy law of heaven.

In dismissing this subject, two facts of stupendous interest press upon our notice. The first is the amazing capability of the human soul, resulting from these distinguishing powers, to *enjoy* and to *suffer*. The pleasures and pains of brutes are of an immeasurably

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* 2 Tim. i. 10. † 1 Tim. iv. 10. ‡ Phil. i. 21. ‖ Phil. i. 23.

lower grade, than those which pertain to man as a moral being. The keen and far-reaching eye of reason, looking into a boundless kingdom of moral interests and relations; the conscience, administering its joyous approval or its deathless pangs of remorse; the affections, feasting upon the objects of their delight, or sighing in want; the will, sweetly allegiant to God and the laws of the universe, or in hopeless rebellion against them; and all these *immortal*—must ultimately administer to the soul a measure of bliss or of wo, which language is too feeble to express. The figures which the Scriptures employ upon this subject, are the boldest and most startling in nature; and yet they remind us that they fall far beneath the reality.*

The second fact to which we allude, is the *progressive* nature of the soul. It *grows* in the present world, and for any thing that appears, it will continue to grow *forever*. Every one of its faculties increases in strength and compass, by use; and unless interfered with by bodily disease or infirmity, this process goes on to the end of life. The legitimate inference is, that when no longer subject to interruptions from physical causes, it will steadily grow forever. If there is any point of doubt here, it must have respect only to the *wicked*. Sin tends to blight the soul and impede its progress, giving us some reason to apprehend that lost spirits will not hereafter advance in strength and capacity, as will the spirits of heaven. However this may be, there can be no doubt respecting the *righteous*. The very

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

nature of mind, which is to grow by use; the effect of virtue, which is health and vigor; the meat and drink of the soul in heaven, ever healthful and exhaustless—make it evident, that the righteous will forever flourish, like the palm-tree, and grow like a cedar of Lebanon.

Shoot your eye down the long track of ages, and you behold that soul which is now tabernacled in this mortal body, that "image of God" within you—if renewed and sanctified, comprehending within itself more knowledge, more capacity for enjoyment, and more actual felicity, than the aggregate of all these ever yet possessed by the human race. Let the ever expanding circles of eternity move round and round again and again, and you reach the point, at which the attainments of that soul leave those which *Gabriel* has now made, in almost sightless distance. This is what the apostle means, by a "*far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"* It is glory added to glory —exceeding, and yet exceeding, forever—as the fruit of these comparatively light afflictions endured for Christ's sake. It is an immortal soul, Godlike in its nature and Godlike in its character, clothed upon with a spiritualized and immortal body, forever speeding its way, on the wings of eternity, towards the infinite perfections of God himself. Associated with all the holy of the universe, it moves with them harmoniously and sweetly on, accomplishing the great end of its creation—glorifying God and enjoying him forever.

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* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

And now, see what you lose, *if you lose your soul!* And oh, see the infinite evil of sin, as it tends to the destruction of such an infinite amount of good;—see the unspeakable folly of neglecting the great salvation by Christ, as it leaves that soul, with all its boundless and immortal powers, to *perish forever!* Was ever a question more solemn and weighty, did ever one involve a greater and more awful truth, than that proposed by Jesus Christ, *What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

CHAPTER V.

DEPRAVITY.

THE subject now before us, is one of the most deep and melancholy interest that ever engaged the human mind. Our preceding subjects have been preparatory to what pertains to the more distinctive and peculiar themes of the gospel—the fall and recovery of man. We have seen what man is as created by God;—we are now to see what he is as a sinner, and what the gospel would make him by grace. As the doctrine of human depravity is the one with which the entire evangelical system stands or falls, I must bespeak for it your most candid attention.

The sin of our progenitors is not the first recorded case of transgression. Far back in the eternal ages—we know not how far—some of the higher orders of intelligence fell from their allegiance to God. He immediately checked the spread of the rebellion in that world, by casting his dark frown upon the rebels, and exiling them from the glory of his presence. "The angels who kept not their first state, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness."* Yet their

* Jude 6.

malicious agency, although entirely excluded from heaven, found its way to our earth. It sought out the innocent pair, as if envious of their happy condition in the bowers of Eden, seduced them from their allegiance to God, and consequently involved their entire race in sin. This is what is commonly called the *fall of man.* Satan was the tempter, and man, the responsible agent, yielded to the temptation, when he ought to have obeyed God. Both were guilty, and both were divinely rebuked.

A tide of moral evil was thus put in motion, which has swept as a flood over the whole earth, filling the world with rebellion against God—with idolatry, and every species of crime—converting a paradise of joy into a vale of tears—and planting the sting of death in every human bosom.

It would be foreign to my purpose, to enter into any explanation here of the nature of the connection between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity. Various theories of explanation have been framed. We have now to do only with the scriptural *fact,* that a connection of some kind does exist, such as involves the race of man in the disastrous consequences of the fall. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

By the depravity of mankind, resulting from the fall, is meant a *disposition to sin.* In its largest sense, it denotes this disposition both dormant and active. The

* Romans v. 12.

following particulars respecting it are important to be noticed.

1. It is in some sense INNATE. That is, it is born into the world with us. As the children of Adam, we inherit his disposition in its fallen, not in its upright state. Our original disposition is not like his *before* he fell, inclined to holiness, but like his *after* he fell, inclined to sin. If there is any period between the birth of the infant soul and moral action, during that period the infant is of course not guilty of actual transgression; still he has that depravity which renders it, not indeed necessary that he *should* sin, yet certain that he *will* sin, when he comes to act morally.

This is inferred from the fact that the earliest moral developement, before any apparent moral change, indicates aversion to holiness. In the holiest of earth's families, and under the most powerful of motives to holiness, the aversion still appears.

It is also evident from another fact, which will be shown in its place, the *universality* of sin. It is impossible to account for this fact, on any principles of cause and effect, without referring it to some universal taint or corruption of our nature.

It is not, however, a matter of mere inference. The Scriptures expressly teach the fact. "Behold," says David, speaking with the inspiration of God, "I was *shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"* Not to press this language of emotion into a metaphysical precision, it seems at least to indicate a conviction in his mind that he inherited by his birth a

* Ps. li. 5.

sinful propensity. Again, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."* This cannot be understood literally, but it surely indicates an *original propensity* to stray. Our Saviour says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;"†—and this he sets in contrast with that which is born of the Spirit. The terms flesh, fleshly mind, carnal mind, are used in the Scriptures to denote sinful propensity. Addressing the Ephesian Church, Paul tells them they "*were by nature children of wrath, even as others.*"‡ And again he says, "By one man's offence *many were made sinners;*"‖—that is, in the original Greek, "*the many*"—the entire race of Adam became a race of sinners. And finally Jehovah himself says, in his own person, "The imagination of man's heart is *evil from his youth.*"§

2. This depravity is strictly MORAL. Any thing like a *physical* depravity, *compelling* us to sin by a natural necessity, as the blood is compelled to flow in our veins, would exonerate us from the guilt of being sinners. But such is *not* the nature of human depravity. The term disposition is used to denote both an involuntary and a voluntary state of mind;—*involuntary*, as indicating mere *propensity; voluntary*, as indicating actual *choice*. In the former sense, it is applied to the infant, before he begins moral action; in the latter, after the way of sin is actually chosen. But in either case, the consciousness of a propensity to sin does not involve the least necessity for sinning, or extenuate the guilt of it. On the contrary, it rather

* Ps. lviii. 3. † John iii. 6. ‡ Eph. ii. 3. ‖ Rom. v. 17. § Gen. viii. 21.

aggravates the guilt;—for when a man discovers in himself a bad propensity, he is especially bound to refuse it indulgence. As we retain all the constitutional powers requisite to obey God, our accountability remains unimpaired. It is only as we freely *consent* to the sin of our progenitors, by choosing to sin ourselves, that we are charged with the transgression of the law. We are just as voluntary in sinning as though Adam had not sinned, and therefore just as guilty.

That our depravity is strictly moral, and hence that every man's sin is his own guilty doing, is evident from the nature of sin, which the apostle defines "a transgression of the law," and also from express declarations of the Bible. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel."*

Whatever then be the connection between the sin of our first parents and ours, their fall has not so changed our constitution that we are, by any physical necessity, compelled to sin. If this were so, sin would be no longer sin; it would be misfortune.

3. This depravity is UNIVERSAL. It extends to the entire race of man, of every age and nation, and to every individual. But one specimen of sinless hu-

* Ezekiel 18.

manity, in the man Christ Jesus, has ever appeared in our world. The infant of a day, as truly as the man of frosty age; the refined gentleman, as truly as the rude savage—inherits the corruption of the fall. All are propense to sin from their birth; all actually *do* sin, so soon as they are capable of moral action. This is a very grave and sweeping charge, and should be made on no other authority than the Word of God. To that authority we appeal. "What then?" says St. Paul, "are we better than they?"—Jews better than Gentiles?—"No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all* under sin. As it is written, there is *none* righteous, no *not one.* There is *none* that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way; they are *together* become unprofitable; there is *none* that doeth good, no *not one.*"—"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that *every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*"—"For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."*

The Scriptures describe the heart of man as *sinful*, referring to man the *genus*—the *race.* The obvious meaning is, that every man is as surely a sinner as he is a man. He has by nature a sinful heart, as certainly as he has a rational mind.†

4. This depravity is TOTAL. As this is the point most misapprehended and disputed, it should be very carefully noticed. Consider, then, that the depravity

* Rom. iii. † Jer. xvii. 9.

in question is strictly *moral.* The intellect, the natural affections, the sympathies, have in themselves no moral quality, and are therefore neither sinful nor holy. Brutes have some degree of intellect, and very high degrees of natural affection and sympathy, but they have neither sin nor holiness. Morality, in the strict religious sense, relates to the *divine law.* When a man is wholly wanting in obedience to that law, he is wholly depraved. Hence men may be totally depraved, and yet be depraved in different degrees. With one man, the effects of depravity are very much restrained within its original seat—his *moral* nature. With another, sin has reached such a pass as nearly to have destroyed his *intellectual* and *social* nature, and to reduce him, in respect to natural affection, below the brute. Rarely is the brute found, who treats his own companion and offspring, as men in certain stages of depravity treat theirs. The young man who came to Christ to inquire what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life, retained much in his social nature which was truly lovely;—while Herod and Nero seemed little else than incarnate fiends. In the latter cases, depravity had become much stronger, and had extended its disastrous effects much wider, than in the former; but the heart of the young man, as truly as those of Herod and Nero, was entirely at variance with the divine law. That law required him to *love God supremely,* and he did not do it. How clearly did Christ demonstrate this, when he applied the test. He teaches the entire depravity of the heart, also, when he describes it as the fountain of every thing evil, and of

nothing good. "For out of the heart," he says, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witnesses, blasphemies."* Here is *unmingled evil;* and it is described by Christ as the natural fruit of the human heart. It is the fruit that the heart always bears, except as it is restrained by education, circumstancial influences, or renewing grace. How perfectly does the condition of the pagan world prove this.

Men are in the Scriptures declared to be "*dead* in trespasses and in sins."† The figure is too plain to be mistaken. When the body is dead, it is without any natural life; so when the soul is dead in sin, it is without any *spiritual* life.

St. Paul says "the carnal mind is *enmity* against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."‡ That this carnal or flesh-serving mind is ascribed to all unrenewed men, and implies the entire absence of holiness, is certain from what follows,—"But *ye*"—addressing Christians—"are *not* in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of Christ dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." To the unbelieving and impenitent, Christ says, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."‖

The necessity of *regeneration*, as taught by Christ, is proof also of the entireness of human depravity;—for if there were even a spark of holiness in the heart, man would not need to be born again, but only to

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* Matt. xv. 19. † Eph. ii. 1. ‡ Rom. viii. 7. ‖ John v. 42.

nurse and educate the infant good already possessed. Instead of telling him that he must be born again, Christ would have told him that he must grow in holiness.

5. This depravity is by human means INVINCIBLE. In vain are exhausted the strongest arguments and most subduing motives to subdue it;—in vain does truth convince, and the providential dealings of God lift up their voices;—in vain do mercies, afflictions, trials, and even the terrors of the death-bed plead—unless the Holy Spirit grant renewing grace. Not that means may be dispensed with; for it is through these that the Holy Spirit operates. Although in their most faithful application we have the most hope of the Spirit, yet however faithfully they are applied, unless the Spirit be given, the sinner will remain in his sins and perish.

Hence Christ says, "Except a man be born *of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—"Marvel not that I say unto you, ye *must be born again*."* St. Paul expressly asserts that *God* is the author of regeneration, and that he accomplishes it by the instrumentality of truth. "Of his own will *begat he us*, by the word of truth."† The same authority says—"Neither is he that planteth *any* thing, neither he that watereth, but *God that giveth the increase*."‡ St. John says that regenerate persons "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*."‖ Christ declares it to be the

* John iii. † James i. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 7. ‖ John i. 13.

special office-work of the Holy Spirit to do what no other agency can accomplish—"convince the world of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come." In the parable of the supper, he describes the utter aversion of man to his gospel, in these words—"*all with one consent began to make excuse;*"*—nor was a *single guest obtained*, excepting as he was *compelled* to come in. Christ even says, "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him."† So great is his aversion that, morally speaking, he *cannot* come; just as the far-gone vicious man cannot come to virtue, nor the miser to benevolence. That is, he is *desperately unwilling;* and this, so far from excusing him, is the exact measure of his guilt. The more unwilling to do his duty, the more sinful. The plain and obvious truth here taught by Christ, is, that such is the strength of human depravity that nothing short of the power of Almighty God can overcome it.

Numerous Scriptures assert or imply, that there is no hope for the sinner but in the Spirit of God. Take such as the following—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and *desperately* wicked."‡ That is to say, it is *so* wicked, that its renovation by mere human agencies is a desperate attempt.

We have thus shown that mankind are natively, morally, universally, totally, and desperately depraved. Let us conclude the chapter with a few concluding remarks respecting the importance of right views on this subject. The subject is one of a very painful and

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* Luke xiv. 18. † John vi. 44. ‡ Jer. xvii. 9.

humiliating nature, and therefore very unpopular. On this account, its importance is much overlooked. It *lies at the very foundation of all gospel religion*;—unless we are right in this, we are wrong in all. Let us explain.

The man who is not convinced of the innateness of human depravity, will entertain feeble and imperfect views of regeneration. If he imagine the sins of men to result merely from bad education or other unpropitious circumstances, he will infer that it is only to change these, and they who before chose the wrong will choose the right. This leaves out of view the necessity for the gracious renewal of the Holy Ghost. If on the other hand a man supposes his depravity to be of a nature to render it physically *impossible* to avoid sinning, thus creating a necessity for the Spirit to give him the natural *power*, instead of the *disposition*, to serve God, he is drawn into the fearful vortex of *fatality*. His sin is only a harsh name for misfortune. His conscience is relieved;—the cold slumbers of an iron stoicism are on his soul, to be disturbed only by the flaming morning of eternity. But if he take the *right* view of his depravity, so far from regarding its innateness as an excuse, he will see it to be a cause for humiliation. Such was the feeling of penitent David—"Behold," he said, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."* This he said, not in extenuation of his guilt, but as calling for deeper self-abasement. Such are the feelings with

* Psalm li.

which every true Christian contemplates his depravity. He abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes.

Equally important is it, to believe the *universality* of human depravity. Otherwise, so self-flattering is the heart, that every man will be prone to rank himself among the favored ones who need no renovation. Especially he who chances to be one of those whom God has blessed with kind, amiable, virtuous sensibilities, and with refined cultivation, will look upon publicans and harlots as fit subjects for renewing grace; but as for himself, he has only to live as he has listed. *Delusive dream!* He must see that *he*, amiable as he is in his own eyes, must be renewed in heart or perish.

So also it is essential that the sinner see his depravity to be *total.* Otherwise, his hope will cling to his supposed spark of holiness; his self-righteousness will shun the gospel method of salvation. That method is one which humbles the heart, and induces the sinner to cast himself upon grace alone.

And finally, the sinner must be convinced that such is the strength of his depravity, that no power but the Holy Ghost can subdue it. He must see that the obduracy of his heart is absolutely invincible by all human means. Otherwise, he will so depend on saving himself, or on being saved by the fidelity of christian friends, as fatally to lose sight of his dependence on God. While he sees that there is no obstacle in the way of his salvation but one for which he is to blame, and that the greater his obstacle the greater his guilt, he despairs of salvation but by the grace of God,

and with the convicted publican, cries, "*God be merciful to me a sinner!*"

Then, indeed, he *finds* mercy. Then it is, that the eye of faith opens to behold the Lamb of God, and pardon and life descend upon his soul. Put not this doctrine aside as the mere tenet or dogma of a sect.

Every individual has in it an interest as important as his everlasting welfare. Not one, who has not an immortal soul, which, unless renewed by grace, is at this moment enthralled in the terrible guilt and bondage of this depravity. Unless deliverance for that soul is obtained, in this brief day of proffered grace, it must wear its chains forever! O, there is an awful import in those scriptures, which describe the condition of the soul when abandoned to the full dominion of its depravity;—chains, darkness, despair, forever doing the terrible work of sin upon the spirit—shutting it in from the glorious light of God, and making it a prey to the worm that never dies, and to the fires that shall never be quenched.

Is it possible that there is such a doom in prospect, and will you sleep over it? When will you hear what God has spoken? Ah! the flattering delusion will soon be over—the stern realities of death and judgment are fast upon us. Unless you awake to the offer of grace, your redemption will soon cease—you must die in sin—die forever!

CHAPTER VI.

NATURE OF ATONEMENT.

THE Christian atonement is hailed by believers as an occasion for holy joy.* Scorned by the unbelieving, as dishonorable to God and needless to man, to the truth-illumined eye it is the brightest gem in the crown of the Godhead, and the only hope of a lost world. What a spectacle must the human race have presented to holy intelligencies above, if we may suppose them to have looked upon it before the light of the atonement dawned. Mankind without even the disposition to return to God, and even if they had the disposition, the offended law having demands which they could never satisfy, no other alternative could have appeared but the complete triumph of the adversary in the remediless ruin of the entire race.

With the light of the atonement a new morning dawned on our world, whose beams shot upwards even into the angelic heavens. A brighter era opened, even

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* Rom. v. 11.

there; a more glorious developement was made to celestial beings of the riches of the wisdom and glory of God.* Accordingly when the fulness of the promised time had come, angel-voices were heard singing in the skies, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men."† And we are divinely taught, that the scheme of human redemption excites such interest in heaven, that it by way of eminence comprehends the "things the angels desire to look into."‡ And yet man, the being most of all interested in it, the being who ought of all others to press it to his heart with tears of grateful joy, in the vain conceit of his own wisdom, is first to pronounce it folly and bid it away.

But the strength of his objections, apart from the sinful hostility of heart, lies mainly in false views of it. Hence the best refutation of objections, is a clear and accurate presentation of the doctrine. Before proceeding therefore to the scriptural *proof* of the doctrine, let us endeavor to understand what it is.

The Christian Atonement is a provision divinely made by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of men.

I know not how at once better to obviate objections, and present a scriptural view of the doctrine, than by exhibiting it in the following particulars:—This atonement is gracious, propitiatory, necessary, vicarious, moral, sufficient, and unlimited.

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* Eph. iii. 10. † Luke ii. 14. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 12.

1. GRACIOUS. It is a provision dictated by feelings purely gracious on the part of the entire Godhead. It has been said, by objectors, to imply feelings in the Father directly the *reverse* of these—feelings of *vindictiveness* towards us;—that it supposes him to have had *revenge* in his heart, which must be gratified, and which, it is said, ought rather to fall on the guilty than on the innocent. Advantage has been taken of a somewhat unguarded use of certain bold poetic figures, to make the atonement teach that the Father actually vented his anger towards us upon his innocent Son, and thus to make it exhibit him in a most repulsive light; while the Son is all grace. Hence distinguished writers have maintained that the doctrine of the atonement eclipses the character of God, and shrouds the universe in an awful gloom.

A more melancholy misapprehension cannot be imagined. All the persons of the Godhead are equally gracious in this transaction. One in essence, the Father and the Son are also *morally* one in the work of redemption. It was in reference to this, that Christ said, "I and my Father are one."* As much as to say, 'This is no divided transaction—we are one in heart and one in action in this glorious enterprise.' It was as gracious on the part of the Father to give up his Son to the ignominious death of the cross, as it was on the part of the Son to give up himself, and on the part of the Holy Ghost to endure grief and insult, in this work of reclaiming sinners. The atonement,

* John. x. 30.

therefore, correctly viewed, so far from imputing vindictiveness to the Father, pre-eminently invests him with a character of unmingled and amazing benevolence. Here is the true account of the matter—"God SO LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life."*

2. PROPITIATORY. The apostle Paul says of Christ, referring to his atoning sacrifice, "Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation*, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."† And St. John says, "He is the *propitiation for our sins*."‡ It has been sometimes represented that the design of the atonement was to *act upon God the Father*—to allay his anger, and render him propitious. This error has done immense evil, in prejudicing men against the atonement. It was not to *render* God propitious that the atonement was made, but to remove the *obstacles* of violated law in the way of his *exercising* his propitiousness. God *loved* us with the love of compassion, and was *disposed* to be propitious towards us, *therefore* he provided this atonement to secure the ends of law, and declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. Such is the plain scriptural presentation of the subject. "Herein is *love*, not that we loved God, but that he *loved us*, and sent his Son to be the *propitiation for our sins*."‖

3. NECESSARY. It is objected that the atonement reflects no glory on the divine wisdom; for, it is said,

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* John iii. 16. † Rom. iii. 25. ‡ 1 John ii. 2. ‖ 1 John iv. 10.

if God was disposed to forgive sinners, he could as well do it without an atonement as with one. It is said, that it would be *more* honorable to God to forgive sinners, without requiring this humiliation and suffering on the part of Christ. But who knows this? Man?—whose breath is in his nostrils—Shall *he* thus dare to arraign at his tribunal the wisdom of Him who charges even his angels with folly? *Man?*—whose intellect is to God's as the feeblest spark to a million suns, shall *he* undertake to decree for God what is necessary and what not, in a moral government that embraces the universe, and is to endure forever? However man may view it, GOD saw this atonement to be necessary. We have conclusive proof of this, in the fact that he has made it. He never does a needless thing;—and especially, it would be infinitely derogatory to him, to suppose that he would subject his dearly beloved Son to such a death, unless he saw it to be needful.

God saw that there must be something to answer the law's demands—something to make as deep and lasting an impression in favor of holiness and against sin, as would be made by the punishment of the sinner—before he could wisely, justly, safely, bestow pardon. There must be something to impress our hopes and fears as powerfully as the original penalty itself. Nothing could do this more effectually than an exhibition of *suffering*, especially as endured by so august a personage as the Son of God. "As offenders were to be delivered *from* sufferings, it was arranged by infinite wisdom that they should be delivered through the suf-

ferings of another, in order to impress them with a sense of the evil of their transgression, of the benevolence of the divine government, and of their obligations to the Mediator. Sufferings were, therefore, introduced into the atonement, because they supplied the greatest number of motives to deter from sin, afforded the greatest amount of reasons for returning to allegiance, gave the soundest grounds of assurance of a cordial reception and pardon, and laid the most numerous and pressing bonds of obligation on the offenders."*

Hence Christ rebuked his disciples for being slow to receive this doctrine:—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken? *Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"† That is, was it not *necessary* that he should suffer these things? "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved Christ to suffer*, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."‡ In asserting that God hath set forth Christ a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, "*that he might be just* and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,"‖ St. Paul clearly teaches, that God would *not* be just to his moral government, to justify men without it; or in other words, that it was *necessary*.

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* Jenkins. † Luke xxiv. 25. ‡ John xxiv. 25, 26; xxiv. 46, 47. ‖ Rom. iii. 25.

4. VICARIOUS. By this is meant that the sufferings and death of Christ are a *literal substitute* for the punishment justly due to the pardoned sinner.

It is a popular modern theory, that the atonement of Christ is a mere *reconcilement*;—that he was sent into our world only to teach us the way of duty, to set us a holy example, and to confirm his teaching and example by his death, and thus to persuade us to be reconciled to God. This includes the *whole* of what some suppose pertains to the atonement. This is a meagre view, overlooking the depth of the riches of Christ, and making his mission to differ in no essential particular from that of other holy prophets and martyrs. It still involves all the difficulties claimed against the vicarious view, on the ground of the innocent suffering for the guilty; for all admit that Christ was an innocent being, and that he did actually suffer and die for us. It has all the supposed *difficulties* of the vicarious views, without its *excellencies*. It requires us to surmount all the obstacles in making pilgrimage to Calvary, to look upon the bleeding Lamb of God, and then to shut our eyes and close our hearts upon the essential glory and power of the cross.

Now the scriptural view of the atonement is, that the sufferings and death of Christ were not only designed, like those of all other martyrs in a good cause, to confirm and impress his teachings, but that they actually *take the place of the* PUNISHMENT *due to pardoned sinners*. They answer, for the believer, the *demands of the broken law*, so that God can be just, and yet justify him.

Let the Scriptures speak for themselves:—"Jehovah hath laid on *him* [Christ] the iniquity of us all." "*He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon *him*, and with *his* stripes *we are healed.*"* "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the *just* for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God."† "Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;—to declare I say at this time his righteousness, *that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"‡

It would seem impossible for language to signify, more forcibly than do these and many similar scriptures, the vicariousness of the atonement.

5. MORAL. Insuperable objections lie against every other view of it. Some have supposed that the sufferings of Christ must have been precisely the same, in kind, with those from which the pardoned sinner is saved. That our Saviour's sufferings did in *some* respects resemble those of lost sinners, is very evident; but that they were in *all* respects the same, is impossible; for the undying worm of sin and the pangs of a remorseful conscience never found place in that holy bosom. Others have thought that Christ suffered to the same *amount*, which the redeemed sinner must otherwise have suffered. Thus would they defeat an important end of the atonement, which was to support

* Isaiah liii. 5. † 1 Pet. iii. 18. ‡ Rom. iii. 25.

the authority of law with a vastly reduced amount of suffering :—This is its benevolence—the brightest ray in its pencil of glories. Others have imagined the atonement a *financial* transaction ;—so much suffering due and paid, for so much sin. Such representations of the atonement are highly figurative, and should be so received. If this mercantile view of the atonement were literally true, Christ could not have died for any but those who are actually saved, and all such could *claim* salvation as *due* to them. They would not come to God to *supplicate*, but to *demand*. Nor does it relieve the matter, to say that the share in God's favor was *purchased* for the sinner and *given* him. Whether your share in a bank was purchased and given you by another, or was procured by yourself, in either case your acknowledged share gives you a *right* in that bank ;—you can go and *demand* your due.

Christ has purchased for us no such right—no such demand on God. God is under no more obligation to us now, than he would have been if Christ had not died. Others have thought that there was a literal *transfer* of our sins to Christ, in such a sense that the Father actually regarded him as guilty, and as such punished him. This is their understanding of the scripture, " He hath laid on him the *iniquity* of us all." But this is a Hebraistic mode of expression, and not uncommon in all languages, in which the cause is put for the effect. The meaning is, it pleased the Father that Christ should *suffer* for *our sins*. The idea of a *literal* transfer of our sins to Christ, and of his righteousness to us, so that he becomes guilty and we

deserving, is utterly inadmissible. There is—there can be—no such barter as this in the divine government.

Others have supposed, that the atonement absolves us from obligation to obey the law. This is the antinomian view; of all others, perhaps, the most mischievous. In this view, Christ did not die to redeem us *to* God but *from* God,—he came not to save us *from* sin, but *in* sin. But did Christ obey the law, that we might not obey it? Did he love God, that we might not love him? Was he holy, and did he suffer being holy, that we might be wicked, and be happy in our wickedness? God forbid!

Now all these difficulties are swept entirely away, by regarding the atonement in a strictly *moral* view. Unencumbered and undeformed by human speculations, it then rises from earth to heaven as a pillar of light, in its own massive grandeur and simple beauty, connecting both worlds and vindicating the ways of God to man. It is in the divine government a *moral equivalent* for the penalty due to sinners, and that without which they could not be justly pardoned. It is a moral provision for supporting the authority of law, preventing future rebellion, and reclaiming the wicked, while a free forgiveness is extended to all penitent believers. A threatened penalty does not deprive a sovereign of his supra-legal power to dispense with it, if he can secure the ends of it by other means. The atonement illustrates the important fact, that although God forgives repenting sinners, their sins are still as great an evil as the threatened penalty implies, and

are by him so regarded. It thus removes the obstacle out of the way of forgiveness. As the apostle says, it vindicates the righteousness of God in the remission of sins, and renders him just while he justifies the believer. There it stands, an amazing spectacle in the eyes of both worlds, manifesting the infinite evil of that sin which could not be forgiven but by the sacrifice of the Son of God. It has already made a mightier moral impression upon the world against sin, than any or all other events since the creation. This impression is constantly *increasing*, and it will continue to increase, till the head of Satan shall be crushed, and the whole race of man feel the benign power of the cross. Nor is its influence restricted to the earth. It reaches above the skies. It will stretch forward into the unexplored ages of eternity, and awaken in the cause of holiness new and everlasting songs in heaven:—"That in the *ages to come*, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus."* The atonement is therefore now, and to all eternity will remain, a *full moral equivalent for the penalty due to sinners.*

6. SUFFICIENT. This would seem to be implied in the foregoing remarks, and yet a distinct point is now in view. The point now asserted is, that the atonement *alone*, without any additions to it by way of penance or otherwise, is sufficient for the greatest sinner upon earth. When Christ bowed his head upon the cross and exclaimed, "*It is finished*," he meant to

* Eph. ii. 7.

say, in the ears of the world, that he had fully accomplished that for which he came; that he had completed the provision of grace; and that the guiltiest sinner had now only to look to him and live. His atonement is just as sufficient for the greatest sinner, as for the least; for the oldest sinner, as for the youngest; for the wretch sunk in the lowest and most disgusting depths of vice, as for the amiable and accomplished young man whom Jesus himself could not help loving. Let this point be well understood, and every human doing in expiation or mitigation of sin is put entirely away, the heart of pride is humbled at the cross, and the renewed spirit receives joyfully a free and full salvation. That "faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation," becomes the privilege of every other "chief" sinner as well as of Paul;—even the most undeserving and guilty may buy wine and milk, without money and without price. There are pardons enough in the suffering Jesus, to make the vilest sinner accepted; riches enough in his righteousness, to make the poorest sinner rich. Should the question arise, how it is possible for the sufferings and death of Christ to be a sufficient substitute for the endless perdition of sinners, the answer is found in the infinite dignity and worthiness of the victim.

7. UNLIMITED. The atonement is a provision made, not for an elect portion, but for the *whole world*. As widely extended as are the consequences of the fall, so widely extended is the provision of the atonement. This position is rejected by a very large and respectable portion of the Christian church. Nor

should this be said to the prejudice of their piety, for the theory of a limited atonement was the only one with which to extricate themselves, on orthodox grounds, from the difficulties arising in a misapprehension of the nature of the atonement as a financial transaction. When the mind approaches the Bible, biased by theory, it is impossible for it to apprehend truths as they are. Theory becomes the interpreter. This is our apology for our brethren in the faith, who have so unhappily, as we think, misapprehended the teachings of Holy Writ on this subject.

Let us then for one moment approach the Scriptures, divested of theory, and see whether they do or do not teach that the atonement was made for *all* men. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD."* Exhorting to prayers and efforts for the salvation of "all men," the apostle says, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have ALL men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself A RANSOM FOR ALL, to be testified in due time."† Again we read, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon ALL MEN unto justification of life."‡ Nothing can be clearer, than that this scripture makes the atonement as unlimited as the fall. The meaning plainly is, that

* 1 John ii. 2. † 1 Tim. ii. 6. ‡ Rom. v. 18.

as the possibility of justification by deeds of merit has been *taken* from all men by the fall, so the possibility of justification has been *restored* to all men by the righteousness of Christ.

The same is implied in the *invitations* of the gospel. "Come unto me *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden."* "Look unto me and be ye saved, *all ye ends of the earth.*"† "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life freely."‡ "Go ye into *all the world*," said Christ, "and preach the gospel to *every* creature,"‖ How could Christ say this, unless he had made gracious *provision* for every creature? "The Father sent the Son," says St. John, "to be the *Saviour of the world.*"§ He "is the Saviour of *all* men," says St. Paul, "*especially of those that believe.*"¶ Here we are taught, that there is a sense in which Christ is the Saviour of *all* men, and a more *special* sense in which he is the Saviour of believers. The meaning is, as explained by the same apostle, that Christ has *provided* salvation for *all* men, and renders this salvation *effectual* to those who *receive* him. "To as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the *sons of God.*"** The heralding of Christ to his great work upon earth, stands recorded in these memorable words—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin OF THE WORLD."††

And now, whether the sufferings and death of Christ did actually make an adequate provision for the salva-

* Matt. xi. 28. † Isaiah xlv. 22. ‡ Rev. xxii. 17. ‖ Mark xvi. 15.
§ 1 John iv. 14. ¶ 1 Tim. iv. 10. ** John i. 12. †† John i. 29.

tion of all mankind, or whether we must still shut our minds into the dark and contracted theory of a limited atonement, judge ye. The fact that all do not embrace it, is no proof that it is not sufficient for all. The efficacy of a medicine is not to be measured by the number of patients cured by it; nor the extent of a king's prerogative to pardon, by the number of criminals actually reprieved.

I have thus exhibited what I conceive to be the most important elements of the Christian atonement, as a gracious, propitiatory, necessary, vicarious, moral, sufficient, and unlimited provision, for the salvation of men.

May I have your attention a moment longer, to advert to the importance of sound scriptural views on this subject.

Unless men regard the atonement as a purely gracious gift of the Godhead, and entirely divest their minds of every thing like a feeling of revenge in the Father venting itself on the sinner's substitute, the doctrine will in their eyes cast such a cloud over the divine character as to induce them to reject it. This has been the most fruitful cause of its rejection, to so melancholy an extent, in this region. Still men must see this atonement to be *propitiatory*, not as *disposing* but as *procuring* the divine propitiousness, lest they profanely approach God in their sins out of Christ, and so be consumed with the breath of his just indignation.

Again, unless men see this atonement to be *necessary* for their salvation, it is so much more gratifying to pride and self-dependence to be saved without it,

that men will be tempted to shun the cross, and trust in the unbought mercy of God. This is the religion of pride, and prepares not the heart for the song of redeeming love.

Again, if men fail to apprehend the *vicariousness* of the atonement, and regard it as a mere reconcilement of sinners to God by the holy example, teaching, and martyr-death of Jesus, they will feel that they are to be saved by him in no other essential sense than by Paul and Peter and all other martyrs for the truth;—along with the offence of the cross, will the power and glory of it depart, leaving the burdened soul, instead of resting by faith on him who bore the penalty of its sins in his body on the tree, to fall back upon its own miserable resources, to grope forever in darkness and legal bondage.

It is also of the highest importance that men should see this atonement to be strictly a *moral* equivalent. For if they adopt the commercial, the imputative, or any similar view, they are, by consistency, plunged into the vortex of Universalism or Antinomianism, on the one side, or cramped into the ungracious triangle of the limitarian theory, on the other. The latter is undoubtedly the safest, because the only orthodox alternative, in this dilemma, but the dilemma itself should be avoided, and the foot of man be set, where God has put it, in a large place.

Equally important is it, that this atonement be seen to be *sufficient*. Otherwise, the man most deeply convicted of sin, who most of all needs encouragement to come to Christ for salvation, will be the first to des-

pair. The convicted sinner, in the exact degree of his conviction, will either resort to penances to make up for the supposed deficiency in the atonement, or conclude that sinners of less guilt may be saved, but not he. Unhappy man!—Let the door of his heart be entered; let the charming voice of Jesus be heard there,—saying in those thrilling tones of grace, *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow.* Then it is that the light of the cross beams gladness on the soul;—not in stinted measure, like "the pale and wan sunshine of a winter's day," but in the full noontide flood of a summer's glories, carrying warmth and life through all the icy chambers of the heart.

And finally, this atonement can never exert its full power, until it is seen to have been made for the *whole world.* To view it as a *limited* provision, tends to prevent the sinner from coming to Christ, with the apprehension that the atonement may not have been made for him; and after he *has* come to Christ, and found acceptance, it tends to restrict his prayers and his efforts for the salvation of all men. Every sinner on the face of the earth ought to know, that an atonement has been made for *him,* and will forever stand charged to his account in heaven; and every Christian ought to know, that an atonement has also been made, by the same agonies and death of Jesus, for every *other* sinner,—that he may, with a whole soul, give his sympathies and prayers and efforts, to reclaim a blood-bought world to God.

In conclusion, I remark, that to these unembarrassed, scriptural, elevated views of the atonement, with its

redeeming power over the human character, all things are tending. The church will come up out of the wilderness, leaning on her beloved. Long and gloomy has been her march. Impeded by errors, sins, and distractions within, and by a scoffing world without, how often has she been cast down and almost destroyed in the way, by the deserved judgments of her God. Still hath God loved her, for Jesus' sake. He remembers Gethsemane,—he remembers Calvary. The spectacle from which the sun hid his face at noonday, will never be forgotten in heaven—never cease from the heart of God,—and by the price he puts upon the death of his own Son, will he make his cause glorious in all the earth.

Amid the upturnings and changes of time, the rise and fall of philosophers, the alternations of superstition and infidelity, and the trials and afflictions of the church, THERE STANDS THE CROSS—the same glorious monument of God's everlasting mercy, looking serenely down on the troubled scene, and ever beaming with the same ineffable lustre. There it *will* stand, till all shall see it, and feel its glorious power;—till the rainbow of love, spanning the heavens around it, shall light up hope in every human bosom, and a ransomed world joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom it has received the atonement.

CHAPTER VII.

PROOF OF THE ATONEMENT.

In the preceding chapter I have endeavored to explain the *nature* of the Christian atonement. I now propose to exhibit the *proof* of it. It is said that the doctrine of a satisfaction made to the divine government for our sins by the blood of Christ, appears only, if at all, in a few isolated passages of the New Testament, which are susceptible of some other meaning; whereas, so important a doctrine, if true, would be the burden of the entire Bible. Here then we join issue. I propose to prove, as summarily as possible, that this doctrine *is* taught throughout the Bible, and is indeed the burden of that book. It will be seen to be the universal sentiment of the Scriptures, that not a soul ever was or ever will be saved from our world, but by the atoning blood of Christ. All the *effects* of the death of Christ on the divine government, as our substitute, and all the reasons why it was *necessary*, we know not. These are among the profound things the angels desire to look into. Becoming modesty requires us rather to rest at present in the revealed *fact*, rejoic-

ing in the assurance that what we know not now we shall know hereafter, in the unfoldings of eternity.

The *fact* in question will be proved by referring to the religion of Adam after the fall, the religion of the patriarchs, the religion of Moses and the prophets, the religion of John the Baptist, the religion of Jesus Christ, the religion of the apostles, and the religion of the millennium and of heaven. These comprehend the entire religion of the Bible, and I am to show that each and all of them are founded on REDEMPTION BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

All must see, at once, that this is a topic of the very highest interest;—it gives the complexion to all our theological views, both theoretical and practical. It involves nothing less than the great question, What we must do to be saved, or in other words, the nature of saving faith. Moreover, if Christ is a Redeemer only as a teacher and exampler, then only those who live on earth since his advent could have the benefit of his redemption; whereas, if his atonement was a satisfaction rendered to the divine government for human sin, that could be done ages after the sin was forgiven, as well as before. This is our doctrine:—We maintain that all the saved from our world, during the four thousand years preceding the advent of Christ, as well as all the saved following, to the end of time, are saved by one and the same *atoning blood of Christ.* Now for the proof.

1. THE RELIGION OF ADAM AFTER THE FALL. God proposed to our unhappy progenitors a scheme of *redemption,* by which he placed them and their pos-

terity under an economy of grace. To the devil, who, St. John informs us,* was impersonated in the serpent, and who had by the fall of man gained ascendancy over him, he said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."† The Hebrew language abounds in short aphoristic sentences, compressing an immense meaning in a small compass. This is an instance. The bruising of the heel implies suffering; the bruising of the head, defeat. Hence the sentiment is, that God would set up a kingdom opposed to Satan; and one should be born of a woman who would, through the sufferings inflicted on him by his foe, succeed to defeat him. This illustrious personage, to be born of a woman, was to endure sufferings at the hand of his adversary, but the blow would eventually turn back on the adversary's head and crush it.

Instantly thereupon was instituted the sin-offering, which was the sacrifice of an innocent victim, the firstling of the flock, and no human being could approach God and find favor without it. It was on this account, as the inspired writer informs us, that Abel was accepted and Cain rejected. Cain was the first born of the fall; and mournfully does he exhibit the fruits of that catastrophe, in setting up his own will against the will of God, and substituting something else in place of that sin-offering, which was designed from the beginning to teach mankind that sin kills, and to typify

* Rev. xii. 9. † Gen. iii. 15.

the great atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. "The Lord *had respect* unto Abel, and to his *offering;* but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had *not* respect."* And so the writer to the Hebrews says, "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a *more excellent sacrifice than Cain*, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead *yet speaketh.*"† Cain brought of the *fruit of the ground* to God; but this did not suffice. There was in it no sin-offering, no bleeding victim, no type of the atoning Saviour. Abel offered with faith the appointed sacrifice, and was accepted; and his example "yet speaketh," and will speak to the end of time, testifying that fallen man is accepted of God, only by faith in an atoning Saviour. Such, then, was the religion of the first age of the world.

2. THE RELIGION OF THE PATRIARCHS. Of these Abraham is at the head, and was indeed the father of the patriarchal religion, as he was also the father of all the faithful. Now let us see whether this atoning sacrifice for sin had a place in *his* religion. In the 22d chapter of Genesis we read that God said to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Abraham promptly obeyed. Not a syllable of question or murmur escaped his lips. Having travelled three days in the wilderness, with the agonizing prospect of his bleeding son

* Gen. iv. 4. † Heb. xi. 4.

before him, he "lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off." Although the father's heart bled, his faith failed not. As he was with his darling son approaching the awful spot, the son said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the *lamb* for a burnt-offering?" This proves that Abraham had been accustomed to offer a bleeding lamb in sacrifice, whenever he approached the altar of God. His faith was now to be very severely tried. His reply was, "My son, *God will provide himself a lamb.*" And when Abraham had bound his son upon the altar, as God commanded, "he stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." At this instant the angel-Jehovah arrested his hand, and said, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns:—and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."* The lamb thus provided, by the special interposition of God, typified the great atoning Lamb to be provided by God for the sin of the world. So we are expressly told. For it was to this very incident the heralder of Christ alluded, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

And for this faith, Abraham received the most distinguished benediction of the Almighty. Jehovah called him out, covenanted with him, commended him

* Gen. xxii.

in the hearing of all subsequent ages, and said to him, "*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" And hence the apostle says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by faith, when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar?"* That is, when it was in his *heart* to do so.

Thus we see that faith in an atoning sacrifice lay at the foundation of the patriarchal religion. In the same faith walked Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, all the patriarchs, and all the pious under their teaching and guardianship, living and dying in expectation of redemption from sin through an atoning sacrifice.

3. THE RELIGION OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS. The very first thing done, after the bringing of the Israelites up out of the house of bondage, was to recognize the atoning sacrifice for sin. "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him, out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of *cattle*, even of the *herd*, and of the *flock*. If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to *make atonement* for him."†

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* James ii. 21. † Lev. i. 1—4.

An order of priesthood was instituted for the express purpose of offering this typical atonement for the sins of the people. The emblem of the great atonement must never be omitted; hence Israel's altars perpetually smoked. The suppliant for mercy laid his hand upon the head of the animal, while he penitentially confessed his sins; and then the spotless victim was slain for an atoning sacrifice. To this the poet refers in that beautiful hymn—

"My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine;
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

"Believing we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing his bleeding love."

What was thus typified by the ordinances of Jewish worship, was also the burden of the prophets. They every where speak of Christ as coming to *suffer* and *die* for the sins of men. This was in their view the *great object* of his advent. In Zechariah we read, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow; *smite the shepherd*, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad."* Christ informs us that this prophecy refers to himself. "Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, *I will smite the Shepherd*, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."† "After three score and two weeks," says

* Zech. xiii. 7. † Matt. xxvi. 31.

Daniel, "*Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.*"* Isaiah says, "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,"—"he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and *by his stripes we are healed.* Jehovah hath *laid on him* the iniquity of us all."—"He is *brought as a Lamb to the slaughter;*"—"He was cut off out of the land of the living;—for *the transgression of my people was he stricken.*" It "pleased Jehovah to bruise him," and to "*make his soul on offering for sin.*"†

That these prophecies refer to Christ, is certain from Acts viii. 32. The Eunuch was sitting and reading in his chariot the prophet Isaiah. This was the scripture—"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth." And the Eunuch answered Philip, and said, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began *at the same scripture* and *preached unto him Jesus.*" Thus an inspired writer has expounded these prophecies as referring to Jesus Christ, and as setting him forth to be an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men. He was in

* Daniel ix. 26. † Isaiah liii.

the prophetic eye to be led *as a Lamb to the slaughter*, and his soul was to be made *an offering for sin*. And observe, it was under this preaching of Christ as an atoning Saviour, that the Eunuch was converted. Thus was the religion of Moses and the prophets founded on the atoning blood of Christ.

4. THE RELIGION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. He was the messenger or forerunner of Christ, predicted by the prophet, sent to prepare his way and make his paths straight.* He introduces Christ into the world, with these words, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" A lamb was the well known victim offered upon the altar for a sin-offering. Had the prominent idea respecting Christ been that of a *teacher*, the emblem of a *lamb* would not have been employed. A lamb is not an emblem of *knowledge*, but of *innocent suffering*. Christ then takes away the sin of the world, not mainly by his teaching, which any other man could be inspired to do as well as he, but by his *death*, as prefigured by the bleeding lamb. This is what none but Christ could do. Paul could teach, when inspired by the Holy Ghost, as well as Christ; but Paul could not die for us, "the just for the unjust;" for he was himself a sinner, and needed an atonement, as well as we. Hence, while we have many teachers and martyrs, we have but one atoning Saviour—one LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is the grand and glorious peculiarity of Christ's redemptive

* Mal. iii. 1.

work, as proclaimed by his herald. "And I saw and bare record," again he says, "that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"* What volumes of meaning in this short sentence:—As much as to say, GOD has now provided the Lamb for sacrifice. The types are ended; the altars of Israel are no longer to smoke; the faith of Abraham is here realized; the real *Lamb of God* has at length appeared.

5. THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST. Through his whole life, the mind of Jesus seems to have been charged with the great idea of being made an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men. So far as appears, he taught but little; he wrote none. What he did teach, is comprised mostly in his short sermon on the mount, and a few parables; which are little else than a summary recapitulation of what had been taught by Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. He said expressly that he came not to teach a new religion, but to fulfil the religion already taught. He rebuked the traditions of men, which had been allowed to obscure its lustre, and pointed the unbelieving Jew to his own sacred writings. He told his disciples that he had a work to do, and was straightened till it be accomplished:—and that this was to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead, that remission of sins might be preached in his name. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and

* John i. 29.

suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man."* Peter was reasoning after the manner of men, and not after the manner of God, when he would dispense with that sacrifice. In the 24th chapter of Luke we are informed that Christ, after his crucifixion, appeared to his sorrowing disciples, upbraided their unbelief, and told them it was *needful* for him to have suffered and died—that he could not otherwise have accomplished the end of his mission. "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets," says the evangelist, "he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."† This proves that "Moses and all the prophets," spoke of him, and that the theme of their predictions was his atoning sacrifice. He then "opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved Christ to suffer*, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." With this view of himself as an atoning Saviour, he gave them his final commission to go forth into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

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* Matt. xvi. 21—23. † Luke xxiv. 27.

6. THE RELIGION OF THE APOSTLES. After the ascension of Christ, the apostles went forth and proclaimed redemption, not by his teaching and example, but by his *blood.* It was when Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was speaking to the multitude of the *death* of Christ;* it was when Philip was making known to the Eunuch remission of sins,† through him who had been led as a lamb to the slaughter; it was when Paul and Silas were presenting the same ground of salvation to the trembling jailor;‡ it was ever when the apostles were preaching Christ *crucified* as "the *end of the law for righteousness*"—that their hearers were convinced of sin and converted to God.

So also in their Epistles, the same doctrine of redemption by the *blood* of Christ is continually repeated. They assert that we "are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through *faith in his blood,* to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past—that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."‖ They assert that Christ, "*by his own blood,*" has "obtained eternal redemption for us;" that "the *blood of Christ,* who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, doth purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God;"§—that we were redeemed, "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold," but "with the *precious blood of Christ, as of a*

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* Acts ii. † Acts viii. 34. ‡ Acts ix. 9. ‖ Rom. iii. 26. § Heb. ix. 12—14.

lamb, without blemish and without spot;"* and that they were "determined to know nothing, save *Jesus Christ and him crucified.*"† Said St. Paul, "I glory only in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world."‡ Not a word, in all this, about redemption by the *teaching* and *example* of Christ; it is all redemption by his "BLOOD"—his atoning sacrifice upon the cross. This was, in the view of the apostles, the great central fact of Christianity—the essential power and glory of the gospel.

7. THE RELIGION OF THE MILLENNIUM AND OF HEAVEN. In his apocalyptic vision, St. John beheld Christ receiving the praises of all the ransomed, for having redeemed them to God "*by his blood.*" The teachings of Christ, which even the deist admits to be excellent, are not mentioned by the revelator as entering at all into the songs of the redeemed. "Thou art worthy," they sing, "to take the book, and to open the seals thereof,"—not, for thou hast *taught*, and hast set us a holy example, but, "*for thou wast slain*, and hast redeemed us to God *by thy blood*, and hast made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign on the earth."‖ Christians are then to reign as kings and priests on the earth, in the latter day glory, in virtue of having been redeemed to God, not by the teaching and example, but by the *blood* of Christ; and this fact is to be the inspiring theme of the songs of all the church, during that happy period.

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* 1 Pet. i. 18. † 1 Cor. ii. 2. ‡ Gal. vi. 14. ‖ Rev. v. 9, 10.

Again the revelator says, "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many *angels* round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ***Worthy is the Lamb*** THAT WAS SLAIN, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and *unto the Lamb* forever and ever."* Thus are we taught, in the strongest language, that both redeemed and angelic spirits in the millennial and the heavenly reigns, will sing glory to God in the highest for the work of redemption *by the* BLOOD *of Christ.*

The religion of the millennium and of heaven is then to be founded on Christ's atoning blood.

To adduce all the scriptural proofs of this doctrine would require a volume;—I have produced only specimens, to serve as keys to unlock the treasures of the Bible respecting this subject. But we have now seen, summarily, that from the opening of the divine revelation down to the remotest future, redemption by the *blood of Christ* is continually set forth. It is typified, symbolized, predicted, asserted, preached, proclaimed to be the wisdom of God and the power of God for salvation; gloried in by the faithful of every age, as

* Rev. v.

the foundation of all their hopes; chanted by the entire ransomed church, in the palmy days of her millennial reign; and finally, it swells the triumphant and everlasting anthems of heaven.

These are briefly our reasons for believing the doctrine, and resting the salvation of our souls upon it. We do not herein, as accused, entrench ourselves in a few favorite and doubtful texts;—we contemplate the *whole* of Scripture, and harmonize it into one consistent doctrine. Nor is it with us a *wavering* faith. We *know* what we believe, and *why* we believe it. The Oracles of God utter no ambiguous voice on this subject. The foundation of our faith is sure. Other foundations are *sand*;—this is *rock*. We expect by this faith to be sustained through the trials and duties of life, to be triumphant in death, and to ascend hereafter to the society of the just made perfect. Millions before us have already done so;—we are herein treading in the steps of glorified saints and martyrs;—we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. We shall soon, if faithful, mingle our unworthy voices with those of angels and redeemed spirits in heaven.

Just in the degree that the Christian ceases from himself and trusts alone in this atonement for salvation, does he feel his heart enlarged with grateful love to God, released from sin's bondage, and filled with the spirit of adoption. A sweet sense of pardon, unearthly peace, and hope full of immortality, become his. He can then truly say, with the psalmist, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my foot upon a rock, and established my goings; and

he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

Redemption by the blood of Christ, is our song in the house of our pilgrimage. Take from us the cross, and our harps are upon the willows;—we must sit down in everlasting silence and grief. Take from this world the cross, and what is it, but a great sepulchre? Thick glooms and night-shades settle all over it, and shut out the last beam of mortal hope. If ever light from the throne of God breaks in upon the darkness of our minds, it is when we profoundly muse upon the august pledges of his love, in the sacrifice of his Son upon the cross. If ever we realize the value of our undying spirits, and God's infinite care for them, it is then. If ever we feel constrained to die unto sin and live unto God, it is then. If ever our hearts know any thing of real, vital, saving religion, it is then. To be able to say, with the apostles, that we "glory only in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to us, and we to the world," we hold to be the noblest attainment of mortals, and their purest and loftiest pleasure, as they journey through this vale of shadows and tears towards the celestial city. And to sing redeeming love, with seraphic heart and voice, we believe to be the noblest employment of the redeemed above.

Our proof of this doctrine has been strictly *scriptural.* But providence and nature speak the same. Such is the mysterious ordering of providence, that nearly every blessing, nay, even our very *existence,* comes to us, through the sufferings, and often the death

of others. Voiceless nature herself could not be silent here. The sun and the stars spake. The serene lustre of Bethlehem's star, that smiled on the infant Redeemer, was followed with the veiling of that greater orb, which refused to look on those dying agonies which wrought out the world's redemption. Thus did all nature sympathize in this amazing transaction. Once, and once only, has the sun put on mourning. No other death has been thus honored. Thus does one and the same voice come from God's word and works, a full and swelling strain, growing clearer, louder, more thrilling, as we listen, proclaiming the wonders of redemption by the cross. Inscribed on the heavens and the earth, borne on every wind, it resounds and re-echoes through the universe.

This doctrine cannot be *innocently denied.* Who can shut his eyes against this flood of light, this overwhelming evidence, and be guiltless? Who can pretend without the grossest inconsistency, to take his religion from the Bible, and yet leave out the Christian atonement? As well might you pretend to walk in the light of noon-day, and leave out the sun. We may in truth say, that reason is too Godlike a faculty to be thus treated with impunity. Such a violation of the highest law of reason—such an abuse of the power of mental vision—in relation to an object so infinitely dear to the heart of God, is set down by God himself as the sin of sins. To trifle with or neglect the cross, is the consummation of guilt.

But if this doctrine be true, then is the religion of the Bible truly a momentous affair. If the eternal

God did actually veil his deity in humanity, and, thus incarnate, bleed and die upon the cross for the redemption of the world, and if the religion of the Bible is—as we have seen it is—a developement of this amazing fact, it is worthy to command the highest possible homage of every rational mind. No man, on approaching this religion, need to fear letting down his intellect, or bestowing his affections upon an unworthy object. Let the scholar of natural learning and science make his highest possible attainments, and, if he embrace this religion, he shall be carried yet higher, immeasurably, into regions of truth, sublimity, glory. This religion comprehends "the exceeding riches of God's grace," the value, the vastness, the grandeur of which, can be estimated only by the sacrifice of the cross. Hence this religion will never be out-run, or outmatched, by the human intellect. It will be found adequate to absorb the highest energies of the mind of the world, during those bright ages when that mind, matured in strength and enriched with knowledge, shall have left its present state far behind, as one of feeble infancy. The glories of the cross will still, more and more, eclipse all other glories. And every man will see it to be his highest wisdom and honor, as Sir Isaac Newton began to see and confess it, to turn from the study of nature to the sublimer study of the cross. Yes, it is in the mind of God, and that benignant purpose is steadily unfolding, "*in the ages to come to show forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus.*"*

* Eph. ii. 7.

Finally, if this doctrine be true, the result must be momentous. In all the works of God, there is a relation of means to ends:—Great means, in the hands of God, are the forerunner of great events. Now here is the greatest of all conceivable means. What greater thing could God do, than give the Son of his bosom to die upon the cross? Who can believe that he has done this, without believing that, as the result of it, he will flood the earth and the universe with the splendors of his throne?

CHAPTER VIII.

ELECTION.

PERHAPS no Christian doctrine has been more misrepresented and abused than that of election. None has furnished more theological difficulties, or put more cavils into the lips of infidelity. It belongs to the deep things of God. Still it is a revealed doctrine, although, like many of the facts in nature, the reasons and relations of it are not fully explained.

The doctrine itself is very lucidly stated by St. Peter.* The apostle is addressing Christians. To awaken their gratitude and confidence towards God, he tells them that they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." He reminds them that they did not first choose God, but that God chose them. But were they elected of God to be saved *in their sins*, as the objector would have it? No. "Through *sanctification of the Spirit*:"—They were to be saved by becoming sanctified. Were they then *first* obedient, and *then* elected; as the Arminian says?

* 1 Peter i. 2.

No. They were elected "*unto* obedience." Election then *precedes* obedience, and is the procuring cause of it. Were they elected to be saved, merely by their *obedience;* as the non-atonement men maintain? No. They were elected "unto the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*" This alludes to the sprinkling of blood in the typical sacrifice, which prefigured the atoning blood of Christ, without the shedding of which there was no remission of sin.

The sentiment is then plainly this,—that Christians were eternally chosen of God unto renewal, obedience, and faith in Christ, for salvation.

This is the doctrine of election.

To unfold all the *reasons* for the doctrine, as they exist in the divine mind, no mortal can pretend;—but if I can succeed to exhibit the doctrine itself, as it lies in my own mind, and as I think it is presented in the Scriptures, so far from appearing dark and repulsive, it will be seen one of the brightest stars in the constellation of Christian doctrines.

The particulars are these:—God has made mankind a race of accountable beings, and would have them all obedient. But they have all wickedly departed from his law, and incurred its penalty. He has placed them under a dispensation of *grace*, and proposed terms of salvation. They all with one consent refuse them. He sends his Spirit to make them willing; and, by this influence, great multitudes have been made willing, and great multitudes more will be, in the day of his power.*

* Ps. cx. 3.

This influence of the Spirit is purely *gracious*; not the reward of antecedent merit. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," says an apostle, "but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life."*

With God nothing is new. All eternity is equally present to his infinite mind. And it is insupposable that he renews a soul, without *intending* to do it; and what he intends, at the moment of renewal, he *always* intended. Hence the grace which secures the salvation of a soul, is not only free and special, but *eternal*. This is what we understand by the doctrine of election.

Let us adduce a few more scriptures in proof of it. "According as he hath chosen us in him," says St. Paul to the Ephesian Christians, "*before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having *predestinated* us to the adoption of children to himself by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he hath made us accepted in the beloved."† Christians were then chosen in Christ, unto holiness, *before the foundation of the world*:—They were *predestinated* to the adoption by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of God's will. I understand Christ to teach the same

* Titus iii. 5. † Eph. i. 4, 5.

doctrine, when he says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, *for so it seemeth good in thy sight.*"* After speaking of his disciples then living, Christ added, "And *other* sheep I have, which are not of this fold; *them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.*"† Those of whom Christ spake were not *then* Christians, but they were to *become* such. Christ knew them, and prayed for them. At another time he said, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that *of all which he hath given me, I should lose none.*"‡ Christians were then *given* to Christ of the Father, as the reward of his death;—and this gift was the fruit of a purpose as eternal as God himself.

In the same view, the inspired historian informs us, that when St. Paul preached at Antioch, "*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*"‖ So also it is written, "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified."§ The same writer illustrates this doctrine by the case of Rebecca's children. "For the children, being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the

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* Matt. xi. 25. † John x. 16. ‡ John vi. 39.
‖ Acts xiii. 48. § Rom. viii. 30.

purpose of God according to *election* might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."* Again he says, referring to the Christian salvation, "The *election* hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded,"†— that is, left in wilful unbelief.

Without occupying more time in proving—what is so manifest from the known attributes of God and from express teachings of the Bible—that all who ever were or will be Christians, were chosen of God in Christ unto this end from eternity, and without entering here upon the comparative merit of the numerous *theories* of explanation, we may proceed to answer some of the *inquiries*, which naturally arise from this subject. I shall notice those only, which involve the most common and plausible objections.

1. Does not this doctrine imply a sort of arbitrary decree, in virtue of which the elect will certainly be saved, and the non-elect certainly be lost, *do as they may?* No. Nothing like it. Even the *elect* will *not* be saved, unless they repent; and the non-elect *will* be saved, if they *do*. And they are all equally free to

* Rom. ix. 11—16. † Rom. xi. 7.

repent; all under the same *obligations* to repent. Election has nothing to do with excluding men from salvation; its influence is all in the opposite direction. It is wholly a cord of *love*;—there is not a single strand of wrath in it. Those who fail of salvation will not fail because of election; but *only* because they choose the way of sin.

2. But does not this doctrine represent God *insincere*, in professing that he would have *all* men to be saved? How so? How does his making some willing to embrace salvation, prove that he would not have *all* willing? This were a strange logic, truly. As if the success of a ruler in securing the return of a portion of his rebellious subjects to allegiance, invalidated the sincerity of his declaration that he would have *all* return. In the parable of the supper, which Christ put forth to illustrate this point, there was provision made for all invited, and all were alike sincerely urged to come. But all with one consent refused. The host then sent servants into the highways and hedges to *compel* guests to come in. Does this prove that he did not sincerely desire to have *all* come?—just as sincerely after he had secured the presence of a portion, as before? While he would have been glad to have them all appreciate his generous offer, and of their own accord promptly accept it, he must yet be left to his own discretion as to how far it might comport with his honor and dignity, and with his numerous claims and relations, to use *special means* with them to *induce* them to come. If your generous neighbor should provide an expensive feast, and send you a pressing note

of invitation, it would be a strange objection for you to make against his *sincerity*, that he does not send a carriage and an officer to force you.

The provision of the gospel is made alike for *all.* All are with the same sincerity invited to receive it. This is what God would that they should all do. But they will not. They all refuse. And now, in the exercise of *special grace*, there must evidently be a limit somewhere; otherwise, all human responsibility is annihilated, and man is encouraged to go all lengths in sin. While it is the good pleasure of God, that all should be obedient and happy, and while he would have all accept the provision of the gospel, he foreknew wherein it was wise for him to exercise grace. This is the meaning of the apostle,—"that according to the *foreknowledge* of God the Father." He *foreknew* whom to elect—whom to make willing—and he does accordingly. That *we* cannot see reasons why God could not wisely do more than he does to reclaim others, is no proof that *he* does not. There is an infinite ocean of reasons in *his* mind, which no human mind can fathom. Even a human king on his throne may see numerous reasons why it would be unwise for him to do more than he does, in the way of special favor, which multitudes of his ignorant people are unable to see. We ought to be satisfied to take God's word for it, that there are in his mind sufficient reasons why he cannot wisely do more than he does, in the way of grace; while he sincerely desires that all would rightly improve the grace they *do* receive, and turn to him and live. He assures us, that he does for the

salvation of all what he sees to be wisest and best, and that he does for none no more. And now, if all men *would* do what all men *could* and *should* do, all men might be saved. But they will not. And as to the gracious work of making them willing, God claims the sovereign prerogative of doing as he sees best.

3. But does not this make God *partial?* If by partiality be meant that he is a respecter of persons, having regard, as men often do, to adventitious *circumstances*, rather than to intrinsic *character*,—or, that in his final judgment he will favor some more than others, irrespective of their deeds, the imputation is false. No such partiality pertains to God. But if the inquiry be, whether God does more for some than for others, in the way of reclaiming grace, our answer is, first, every true Christian does feel that God has done something for his soul which he had not once done, and which he has not done for the soul of the impenitent sinner;—secondly, the same degree of influence which God gives to some sinners, may, through their resistance, fail to convert them, when it actually does convert others;—thirdly, all men under the gospel have undoubtedly enough of gracious influence to convert them, if they did not resist it;—and fourthly, all the influences of the Spirit are a pure gratuity, and it is hence God's sovereign right to do with them as he pleases. "Is it not lawful for me," he says, "to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?"* "Therefore," says the apostle, "he

* Matt. xx. 15.

hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* That is, those with whom he sees it to be wise to render his grace effectual, he saves; and those of whom he sees it to be wise to say, "My spirit shall no longer strive," he leaves to their determined course of hardness and reprobation.

This is in strict analogy with all his *other* doings. It is the same God who gives to one riches, and to another poverty; to one sickness, and to another health; to one beauty, and to another ugliness; to one all the blessings of learning, civilization, and refinement, and to another the savage state. While he deals *unjustly* by *none*, he distributes his *gratuities* as he in his wisdom sees best. Thus does he humble the vain self-confidence and glory of man, and say to him, "Lift not up your horn on high; speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge;—he putteth down one, and setteth up another."† In all this he has wise reasons of his own,—he giveth no account of his motives. His glory is in concealing. And so in his kingdom of grace, he has wise reasons, known only to himself, for giving a more faithful dispensation of his gospel to some than to others,—for placing some under the ministrations of a pastor who will faithfully seek their salvation, and others under the ministrations of one who will be more solicitous to please than save them;—for placing some in connection with a consistent, prayerful, devoted church, whose

* Rom. ix. 18. † Ps. lxxv. 6.

labors he will bless to their conversion, while others are placed in connection with influences unfavorable to this result;—and finally, for so ordering the manner and degree of the Spirit's influence as to secure the conversion of some, while others are left in impenitence.

4. Does not this doctrine tend to make the Christian *vain?* It is perpetually urged against it, that it puffs up the vanity of those who embrace it, by inspiring them with the conceit of being the Lord's favorites. Exactly the reverse. This objection, although boldly asserted, does certainly come with a very ill grace from those who advocate election on the ground of *personal worth.* The Arminian theory, that God elects men to salvation, because he sees something *good* in them, and the still bolder theory, that he does it because they have by their own *good doings* laid him under an *obligation* to them, cannot do otherwise than foster human vanity.

But the doctrine, understandingly embraced by the Christian, that God from eternity *compassionated* him, while yet in his *sins,*—that of his own free grace, he turned his feet from the way of death, pardoned him, and breathed the breath of life into his soul, always tends to inspire sentiments of profoundest humility and gratitude. It is indeed with this very view, that Christ and his apostles set forth this doctrine. Another obvious motive was to *strengthen* and *embolden* Christians. As the apostle said, to enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they may know what is the hope of

their calling, and what the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints.*

The thought that they were chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should become holy and without blame before him in love, and were thus plucked by the hand of grace, contrary to all their deserts, as brands from the devouring flame, while it serves to take from them all boasting and to make them very humble, serves equally to assure them, that he who has loved them from eternity will love them still and make them victorious over the world. Such was the reasoning of the apostle:—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?"†—"If when we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being *reconciled*, we shall be saved by his life."‡ Thus Christian humility and Christian boldness unite. These twin sisters—daughters of light—divorced and abused by sin, are re-united by this blessed doctrine, and made to move on hand in hand with the Christian, removing the last remains of self-glorifying from his heart, and arming it with invincible energy in the divine life.

5. Does not this doctrine *discourage the use of means?*

It is said, that it makes the foreordination of God so determine who shall be saved and who lost, that all attempts on the part of man to make the number of the saved greater or less, are of necessity vain. This is

* Eph. i. 18. † Rom. viii. 34. ‡ Rom. v. 10.

not true. The foreordination of God in respect to the salvation of men, is the same that it is in respect to every other future event, which is to be brought about by human agency. Our agency being *itself* a part of the divine purpose, it is essential to the result. It was foreordained of God from eternity that you should be where you are to-day, as truly as was the salvation of Paul; but it was *also* foreordained, that it should be brought about by the free use of your own powers—your understanding, conscience and will, as well as your bodily members. So that the divine foreordination respecting the event, could not have been realized but by your own free agency. It was in this view, that St. Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved,"* although he had just told them, by an assurance from heaven, that not one of them should be lost. They were to be saved indeed, but it was to be done only by their obeying the instructions. And so also if God has purposed your salvation, he has purposed that it shall be brought about by your own voluntary obedience to his requirements. Divine foreordination no more dispenses with means in respect to your salvation, than in respect to any other future event. It renders your salvation certain, in no other sense than it does your autumnal harvest, the continuance of your life, your future health, wealth, and knowledge. Yet who but a mad man would say, If God has foreordained that my fields shall yield a harvest in autumn, they will certainly yield one; and therefore

* Acts xxvii. 31.

I need not make any exertions to secure it.—If God has foreordained the continuance of my life, I shall certainly live, and therefore I may leave off eating :—if God has foreordained that my mind shall be stored with knowledge, it will surely come to pass, then why should I toil in study :—if God has foreordained that I shall be rich, so it must be, and therefore I may be idle and prodigal :—if God has foreordained that I shall be virtuous and respected, these blessings are surely mine, and therefore I may safely give reins to appetite and plunge into vice :—if God has foreordained that my sick child shall recover, he will of course recover, and therefore I may as well do nothing to heal him.

No man can question the foreordination of God respecting all these things, unless he denies God's natural perfections:—but who in his right mind ever reasoned thus respecting them ? Yet this is precisely the reasoning of those who make the foreordination of God respecting their salvation an excuse for doing nothing to secure it. They have no right thus to separate the means from the end. It is *not* foreordained that the farmer shall gather a harvest in autumn, excepting as he shall use the means to that result indicated by the course of nature. The same is true in regard to your future attainments of knowledge, health, character, and all other things, for which means are indispensable ;—and precisely the same is true in regard to the salvation of your soul. If then you will freely consent so to use your powers and opportunities, as to become obedient unto the truth, you will make your

"calling and election" sure ;—that is, you will make it sure that you are called and elected to salvation.

But unless you do thus, there is no decree in the mind of God that will save you ;—the perdition of your soul is as certain as the course of nature ! So sure as the laws of the universe move on, so sure your soul must die ! " We are not to pry immediately into the decree," says Archbishop Leighton, " but to read it in the performance. Although, from present unsanctification a man cannot infer that he is not elected ; for the decree may, for part of a man's life run, as it were, under ground ; yet this is sure, that that estate leads to death, and unless it be broken will prove the black line of reprobation. But he who loves, may be sure that he was loved first ; and he who chooses God for his delight and portion, may conclude confidently that God hath chosen him."

And further, let all who would be saved consider that the Holy Spirit ordinarily selects the subjects of his renewing grace, not from those who contemn sacred things, but from those who revere them ; not from those who profane the sabbath, by wandering in the fields, making excursions of pleasure, or indulging in social entertainments, but from those who faithfully attend upon the preached gospel ; not from those who brutalize their minds, by a gross indulgence of sensual appetites, but from those who are temperate in all things ; not from those who indulge sleep, or wandering imagination, in the sanctuary, but from those who give earnest thought to the proclaimed truth ; not from those who are wholly absorbed in the pursuit of gain,

but from those who give due consideration to the interests of their souls; not from those who often resist gracious calls and strivings, but from those who are prompt to improve the accepted time. And thus, while God maintains his entire sovereignty, in respect to his reclaiming grace, he does it in a way to furnish the most powerful motives to restrain wickedness, and rouse up every soul to the claims of religion.

There is still another view, in which the doctrine under consideration not only throws no impediment in the way, but holds forth the strongest possible inducements to seek salvation. Suppose it were revealed, that a certain number of individuals, to us unknown, are destined, through the use of certain means, to secure a large fortune. What a motive for all who are desirous of wealth, to be diligent in the use of the appointed means. Suppose you were in a storm at sea, and there was no prospect of escaping destruction; but it was somehow revealed to you that many on board would be saved. As you valued life, how powerful would this motive be to exert yourself.

Such is the inducement held forth to every man, by the doctrine of election, to give all diligence to secure eternal life. It is enough for him to know that Christ has died to save him, that heaven is to be peopled with a great multitude of redeemed souls; that the number to be saved, and who they are, is to appear hereafter; but that this is clearly revealed, that all who would be saved must be in *earnest* for it; for feeble and irresolute efforts will not avail. This is precisely the use which Christ made of the doctrine. When one came

to him inquiring, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" he replied, "*Strive* to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will *seek* to enter in"—make some feeble efforts—"but will not be able."* Again he says, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth *violence*, and the violent take it by force."† This surely does not look like being borne up to heaven in chariots of ease, by some glorious decree—some provision to rid us of responsibility. The same use did an *apostle* make of this doctrine. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give *diligence* to make your calling and election sure."‡

The same motives does this doctrine afford the Christian to the faithful use of means for the conversion of others. Suppose some epidemic were raging in the community, and sweeping its thousands into the grave:—but a humane physician is in some way assured, that by the faithful use of remedies large numbers are to be healed. What a motive to encourage his efforts to save them. Instead of being disheartened with the prospect of universal failure, he has the cheering assurance that his efforts will not be vain. Moreover, as the number to be healed is not specified, and will naturally be in proportion to the means used, he is under the most urgent inducements to exert himself to the utmost. This is the very encouragement given by the Lord to Paul to preach the gospel. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am

* Luke xiii. 24. † Matt. xi. 12. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 10.

with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, *for I have much people in this city.*"* This was said before that "much people" was converted. Paul was yet to do a great work there;—many were to be converted. The result was a fulfilment of the prediction. Many *were* converted there, and the Corinthian church was thus formed. Thus we see that the members of the Corinthian church were *chosen* of God *before* they were converted. The same is the ground of encouragement for *all* who would labor for the salvation of men. Appearances are always against success. No man can doubt this, who knows the strength of human depravity, and the mountain-like obstacles in the way of turning men to God. Yet they have the animating assurance, that the covenant of Jehovah standeth sure, that the blood of Christ has not flowed in vain; that he is to have a redeemed people from the ruins of the fall; and that a great multitude, which no man can number, out of every kindred and tongue and nation, will stand before the throne of God with palms in their hands, clothed with white robes;—and that this glorious consummation is to be effected, under God, by human means. Thus encouraged, the gospel-heralds go forth to prophesy upon the vallies of dead bones, and all the friends of Christ are invited to unite their prayers and efforts to accomplish the divine purposes of saving grace. And thus will the number of the elect continue to increase, until the triumphs of redeeming love shall compass the world.

* Acts xviii. 9.

CHAPTER IX.

NATURE OF REGENERATION.

THIS world is divided between two spiritual kingdoms, that of Satan and that of God. Satan is declared to be the prince of the power of the air, reigning in the children of disobedience.* He therefore has a kingdom in our world. It is unnecessary to be born again, in order to become a subject of his kingdom. But born again we must be, in order to become subjects of the kingdom of God.† Let us endeavor to ascertain the *nature* of this second birth. This is a subject of the very highest importance:—all that is valuable to the soul, in God's holy kingdom, is staked upon it;—and we should spare no pains, to render our views respecting it as clear and scriptural as possible.

To be born again—what can this mean? The language is figurative, but strongly expressive. The first or natural birth is a great *physical* change, at which the bodily eye is opened on this material world;—the second birth is a great *spiritual* change, at which the

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* Eph. ii. 2. † John iii. 3.

mental eye is opened on the kingdom of God. The *first* birth makes us heirs of earth; the *second*, of heaven. It would be injustice not to give a passing notice to the various theories of men on this subject.

Some have supposed that this new birth is merely a renunciation of heathenism; and consequently, that none but heathens require it. This cannot be true;—for the Jewish ruler, whom Christ taught that he must be born again, or he could not see the kingdom of God, was not a heathen.

Others have supposed that it is merely a renunciation of Judaism, as it is opposed to Christianity; and consequently that all who live in Christian lands, and acknowledge the divine mission of Christ, do not require it. This cannot be true;—for the Jewish ruler had just acknowledged this faith in Christ.—"Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." But Christ, not allowing him for a moment to suppose this sufficient, replied to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Others have labored to maintain that the new birth is *baptism*.* But Christ said, in describing the event, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; *so* is every one that is born of God."

* The Episcopal church employs the term regeneration to denote the rite of baptism, holding still to the same spiritual renovation here contended for, and designating it by other terms. This is very well, if so understood;—it is not the *name*, but the *reality*, to which importance belongs. The term regeneration may with propriety be applied either to the rite, or to the thing which the rite signifies.

By no conceivable interpretation can this language possibly be descriptive of a water baptism. Christ here describes the new birth as the result of some *mysterious* operation; like that of the *wind*, whose coming and going we cannot tell. But there is nothing mysterious in baptism;—it is a very plain and obvious ordinance, performed by a gross and visible fluid, which has no resemblance to the subtle and invisible wind, and whose coming and going we plainly see and understand. Moreover the same authority said, "Except a man be born of water *and* of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now whether you understand this literally, or figuratively, the result is the same, so far as the present point is concerned. If literally, the declaration clearly is, contrary to a prevalent error, that a mere *water* baptism is not sufficient, but that there must also be a *spiritual* baptism:—There must be that done, *internally*, by the Spirit of God, which is signified externally by water. If it be understood figuratively, there was of course no reference to water baptism. To be born of water and of the Spirit, is an idiomatic expression, well known to the Hebrew scholar, importing a spiritual renovation or cleansing, similar to that intended by John when he said of Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In such expressions, the purifying agents in nature, such as water and fire, are coupled with the Holy Spirit, to convey the forcible idea of his purifying agency in the heart.

Others have thought that this new birth is merely a renunciation of secular vices, and becoming virtuous.

This cannot be;—for the young man who came to Christ to learn what he must do to inherit eternal life, was very virtuous and amiable, insomuch that Jesus himself loved him. Yet he went away sorrowful, when taught the necessity of renouncing the world.

Others again, going to an opposite extreme of error, have supposed that the new birth is a change in the *constitution* of the mind. But is it not incredible that God should have committed an error in making the mind, and find it necessary to do his work over? Moreover, what God does, even if it *were* wrong, his creatures are not responsible for. But man is held responsible—he is under condemnation—for unregeneracy. Consequently the necessity for a change in him, cannot pertain to his constitutional properties. No man is to blame for not having been made taller than he is; for inheriting a weak or asthmatic constitution, instead of a healthy one; for not possessing the native intellect of a Newton or an Edwards, when he has only an ordinary one; nor for any thing whatever, whether of mind or body, which he received from God, or paternal inheritance, and over which he never could have any possible control. The man who denies this, is not to be reasoned with. The new birth in question cannot, then, imply a constitutional or *physical* change, in any proper sense of that term.

In order to see clearly the nature of the change in question, we must consider what man was as created by God; what he has made himself by sin; and what he actually becomes by regeneration. We then arrive at the truth here, just as we do on other subjects,

by observation and experience. We examine facts and decide upon them, *as they are.*

Man originally came from the hand of the Creator perfect in his entire nature. He was not only perfectly planned, but perfectly executed. God himself pronounced the work "good." All his physical members and functions were in a state of vigorous and happy health; all his intellectual and moral powers were sound and upright; all his social affections were pure. So soon as his eyes opened on creation, his heart rose in love and gratitude to God. Affectionately and supremely devoted to his Maker, he was a truly religious, a holy man. But he was not *confirmed* in holiness. He had not been *tried.* Possessing all the natural susceptibilities to temptation which our Saviour did, without being like him confirmed in holiness, it was of course possible for him to yield to temptation, and thus fall into sin. He did yield; he fell; he became a sinner.

So long as God was by him supremely regarded, the presence to his soul of so glorious an object, so blessed a portion, kept all his powers in order. But so soon as he forsook God, sought to hide from his presence and find his happiness in *forbidden* ways, his love of worldly things became excessive, his appetites impatient, his passions feverish, and his whole nature diseased. His understanding was darkened, his intellect enfeebled, his social affections disordered, and his body became diseased and prone to death. His soul fell into the fiery gulph of selfishness; and instead of entertaining its former love, joy,

peace, began to feel the burning of envy, jealousy, strife, hatred, discontent, and every selfish and tormenting passion.

Such then was man, originally, as made by God; and such was he, as he made himself by sin. Now by the operation of the great law of natural descent, all the *posterity* of Adam, left to themselves, are what he was after he fell. Every child, unless grace interpose, grows up to do as Adam did after he became a sinner. Instead of loving God supremely, he supremely loves himself and the world. No warm kindling of delight beams in his eye, when the command of God falls on his ears. Thus selfishly disposed, he prefers that God would let him alone. The choice of God and his choice are at variance; the law of God and his heart are in opposition to each other.

But although by nature predisposed thus to resist the will of God, he is still entirely competent to know and choose the way of obedience; and hence the entire weight of personal guilt rests upon him if he does not. This original propensity of the mind to resist the divine law, becomes active and strong by indulgence, and thus becomes its fixed character. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* Along with this apostacy of the will from the law of God come all those other irregularities, more or less, of the physical, intellectual, and social nature, to which we have adverted.

* Rom. viii. 7.

This then is the moral condition of every individual, until grace interpose. He is utterly destitute of holiness;—the moral disposition or ruling choice of his mind, is opposed to the divine law. Left to himself, he will *go on in sin forever.*

We can now see precisely the change *needed*, and consequently *effected*, by regeneration. It is a change from the love of sin to the love of holiness. It is a *new born affection.* It is a renovation of heart. It implies the beginning of obedience to the divine law. From what has been said, it is manifest that it cannot mean less, and cannot mean more. Precisely this is indicated in all the scriptures which denote the change. They describe it as the making of a new heart and a new spirit;—being renewed in the spirit of the mind;—becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus; ceasing to be wholly carnal, and beginning to be spiritually minded;—the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;—being born of the Spirit. All these expressions most evidently denote one and the same thing—the exact thing which we have defined as what our Saviour meant by being born again.

But the precise nature of this change will be better understood if we analyze it, and consider it both *intrinsically* and *relatively.*

Considered as an intrinsic change, it is,

1. SPIRITUAL. The subject of it has not only the same corporeal faculties, but precisely the same reason, intellect, judgment, the same native genius, the same natural temperament and disposition, that he had before;—excepting as they are affected secondarily.

The change itself is purely of the *spiritual* man. The spirit of *opposition* to God, has become one of *submission* and *love*. The change is precisely this;—nothing more nor less.

2. VOLUNTARY. No man becomes a Christian against his will. My people shall be willing, in the day of my power, saith God; and none can be truly his people, excepting as they are cordially willing to be such. Except a man give the free consent of his heart to serve the Lord, he cannot acceptably serve him. No man goes to heaven, but with the sincere desire and purpose of his soul. Not only is he willing to be *saved*, but willing to *do* what God requires. And from the nature of the change, he must become willing, if at all, *willingly*. Regeneration implies, then, not only the activity of thought, but of volition.

3. INSTANTANEOUS. It is usually preceded by a process, longer or shorter, of thoughtfulness, feeling, solicitude; but the transition itself occupies no measurable space of time. There is no moment when it can be said of an individual, that he is in a transition state—neither saint nor sinner. He is either willing or unwilling; regenerate, or unregenerate; an heir of heaven, or a child of wrath. He may not, from want of attention to the operations of his mind, know when the change takes place;—nor is that important. You may not notice the time of the sun's rising, for it may rise in a cloud; but when it shines with noon-day splendor, it has surely risen; and there was a moment when its golden wheel first clipped the horizon. Those who consider regeneration progressive, confound it with

sanctification. The former is the *beginning* of spiritual life; the latter is *growth* in spiritual life. The former is the rising of the sun;—the latter is its rolling yet upward on its glorious track.

4. GENERIC. It is not a change of merely subordinate volitions. Such changes are very frequent, with both regenerate and unregenerate men. Nothing is more common, than for an irreligious man to give up one sin for another; to hate a particular vice at one period, which he loves at another; to make and execute various purposes of reform; and thus, in the course of life, to pass through an endless variety of changes for better or for worse:—but the new birth, of which Christ speaks, is a generic change of disposition in respect to *all* sin. It implies a new *governing* purpose, a *ruling* choice of mind, to renounce *all* wicked ways, and serve the God of heaven.

5. PARTIAL. Although it is a generic change, yet it does not render the heart *perfectly holy*. A man may love God supremely, so as sincerely to obey the law, and yet not love God with *all his heart*, so as to obey the law *perfectly*. The love of God is the *dominant* affection of the new born soul; but there still remains in that soul much of its old corruptions. Even the best of Christians must sometimes say with Job, "*Behold, I am vile;*" and with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—"I find a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind."

6. PERMANENT. All other moral states of the soul are transient;—but that into which regeneration

introduces it, is one from which it never departs. Once born again, it shall never die. The principle of immortal life is there. It cannot die, for it has within it the deathless spirit of Christ. The principle of holiness, implanted by regeneration, will survive all the changes of time, will continue to grow and exterminate remaining sin ; it will finally pervade and sanctify the entire soul, and place it among the stars of heaven. "This is the will of the Father," said Christ, "that of all which he has given me, I should *lose none.*"* The notion of fatally falling from grace, is alike unphilosophical and unscriptural.

Such is the nature of the change in question, considered in itself. Let us now consider it *relatively*. It changes the *relation* of its subject.

1. To Jesus Christ. Before this change, the individual stood related to Christ as an *unbeliever*, having no portion in his kingdom ;—he now sustains the relation of a *believer*, being thus made an heir to all the riches of his grace. He is by faith *married* to Christ, as the Scriptures express it ; and by virtue of this union becomes a partaker of the righteousness, the honor, the wealth, the glory, which Christ had with the Father from eternity.† Before this change he was poor, now he is rich ;—before, he was obscure, and without honor, now his name is chronicled in heaven, and he is associated with the nobility of the universe. There is also a corresponding change in his *views* and *feelings* respecting Christ. Before, Christ was to him

* John vi. 39. † Rom. vii. 4.

as a root out of dry ground—having no form nor comeliness that he should desire him ; now, he is to him the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

2. To THE LAW. Before this change, he was subject to the penalty of the law; now, the law has nothing against him. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned ; but he that believeth not, is condemned already." Before, he was related to the law as a rule of *justification*, and was by it condemned ; now, he is related to it only as a rule of *duty*, and it has no power to condemn him. Christ has, in this respect, taken him out of the hands of the law :—"There is now, therefore, *no condemnation* to them who are in Christ Jesus."* But while the law has thus lost its power to condemn him, he has received of Christ what the law could not give him, the spiritual disposition to *obey* the law. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."† Thus two mighty points are gained in his relation to the law :—first, he is delivered from its penalty ; secondly, from being in heart a transgressor of it, he has become an obedient subject.

3. To THE HOLY SPIRIT. Before this change, the Holy Spirit was to him a mere visitor—a stranger ;—now he is an indweller—an abiding friend.

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* Rom. viii. 1. † Rom. viii. 3, 4.

"Know ye not," says St. Paul, to the Corinthian Christians, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the *Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"* Before, the Spirit *came* to dwell, but was *not received*:—he was resisted and grieved away. Now, he has gained admission, is no longer resisted, but has become a permanent occupant of the soul, to enlighten, guide, sanctify, and comfort it. Never, through all eternity, will that soul be without the gracious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In and through it, will the Holy Spirit reflect the brightness of his own glories in heaven.

4. To THE TRUTH. Before this change, his moral feelings sustained to the distinguishing features of the Bible the relation of hostility, aversion, or at the best of indifference. Those discriminating, pungent, unearthly teachings of God's Word, respecting human accountability, sinfulness, dependence; the way of salvation by grace, and everlasting retribution—found no cordial reception, no grateful response, in that dark and sensual heart. But now, they feast and delight it. Thy word is very pure, says the heaven-born soul, therefore doth thy servant love it;—O, how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day. It is sweeter to my taste than honey, and the honey-comb.

5. To CHRISTIANS. Prior to this change, his moral feelings towards Christians were much the same as towards the truth. He loved them, perhaps, as men; but in their distinguishing character as Christians, he was conscious of no delightful fellowship with them,

* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

and often of positive aversion. He could join with them in secular and social interests, but in the things of religion there was no sweet union of heart with heart. He often saw and painfully felt, that there was between Christians a common bond of attraction, and a way of access to the Father, to which he was a stranger. Now, he has access by the same Spirit with them unto the Father;—he is no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.* Now, he says to them, like the noble-purposed Ruth—"Whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

6. To the cause of Christ. Before this change, the welfare of Christ's kingdom sustained to his mind the relation of a very subordinate importance, if indeed of any importance whatever. He was perhaps ashamed to believe it, but it was often forced upon his conviction, that he loved his selfish ease, indulgence, wealth, aggrandisement, more than that cause which cost the blood of the Son of God, and on which depends the salvation of the world. Now, it is far otherwise. He longs to see the religion of Jesus embraced by every heart, and welcomed through all the earth. So much does he desire this, that he not only prays daily, Thy kingdom come, but he makes exertions and sacrifices for it;—he is even willing, if so called, for this end, to leave home and country and go to the heathen. The

* Eph. ii. 18, 19.

struggles and conquests of Zion are his;—her tears his tears, her joys his joys. He can now truly say,

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode;
The church, our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.

"For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

7. To ETERNITY. Before this change, the things of the present world were to his mind of paramount importance, and those of eternity subordinate. Now the position is reversed. Eternity is no longer to him that dim, shadowy, unreal object; nor is this world that bright and substantial reality. Although he has lost none of his sensibility, yet the afflictions and trials, the joys and gains, of earth, are far less in his eye than once they were;—the glories of eternity have dawned on his vision. For this cause, he faints not; but though his outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day. For his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while he looks, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;—for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

*2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

He now *knows* that religion is no figment of a disordered fancy. His eye kindles with new animation. Existence has become to him a privilege never before realized. With joyful step, does he enter the narrow way to life everlasting. Henceforth he is not of the world, even as Christ was not. Its pomps and pleasures, its wealth and fame, are no longer his heart's treasure. He enjoys the things of this world with a relish more pure and keen, because more subdued and virtuous, than before; and he is not unwilling to abide here all the days of his appointed time, till his change comes;—but often does he look serenely forth on immortality,—often is the celestial city in his eye, where he is soon to join the general assembly and church of the first born, to drink with them of its crystal waters, and sing hallelujahs forever.

Such is that new birth, which Christ has said we must all experience, or we can never see his kingdom. And how rational, how accordant with fact, how truly sublime and glorious, is the event, in this view of it, compared with those meagre theories with which earthly minds would invest it. Here, as elsewhere, truth is noble, error is contemptible. In this view of regeneration, it truly is, as it is ever set forth in God's teachings, transcendantly the most important event in the affairs of men. Let the thoughtless and the vain disdain it, as they sweep along the broad way to death;—but let the sober and the wise pause and think. Here is an event, which even the angels in heaven stoop to rejoice over. It is a new and bright era in the history of an immortal mind;—

an event, in which the lost spirit is found, the poor made rich, the rebel restored, the dead in sin made alive in holiness, the vessel of wrath made an heir of glory ;—an event, whose results extend through all time and all eternity ;—forever exalting its subject from a debasing career of sin and misery, with the fallen and wretched outcasts of creation, to a career of glory and bliss, with the angels of God. Who—would not be born again ? Who would not be a Christian ?

CHAPTER X.

THE AUTHOR OF REGENERATION.

THE Scriptures instruct us that we are saved "by the *washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*"* What are we to understand by this language? Very serious errors have been entertained here. By a literal interpretation of metaphorical language, confounding the *sign* with the thing *signified*, has come the opinion that regeneration is only baptism. The consequences to the cause of vital Christianity have been deplorable in every age, from Justin Martyr downwards. It is a blunder of interpretation, similar in kind to that which makes the symbol of Christ's body in the sacrament, his body itself. It is a fact worthy of notice, that they who interpret the figurative language of the Bible literally, by a parity of blunder sadly atone for so doing, by interpreting its literal language figuratively; and thus they pervert and displace the most solemn and momentous teachings of God. The washing of regeneration is *not*, as some of the

* Titus iii. 5.

Fathers and the Romanists say, a literal washing of the body with water; but, by a pertinent and forcible similitude drawn from that purifying element, it designates the cleansing agency of the Holy Ghost in the soul. The latter clause of the passage, by a Hebrew parallelism, is explanatory of the former:—the "*renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" A careful study of this important law of figurative language, and particularly of the Hebrew idiom, which abounds in the New Testament, might have saved the world from a desolating flood of errors.

The position now to be maintained is this, REGENERATION IS EFFECTED BY THE AGENCY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Christ said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"—and that "except a man is born *of the Spirit*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* This spiritual change is expressly denied to be of men, and declared to be wrought in the soul by divine efficiency, operating through faith in Christ. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*"†

Other passages of Scripture assert, in the same breath and with the same explicitness, both the *author* and the *instrument* of regeneration. "Of his own will begat *he* us, with the *word of truth*, that we should be a kind

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* John iii. 6, 7. † John i. 13.

of first fruits of his creatures."* Here we are taught, that the Holy Ghost is the author of regeneration, and that he employs in the work the instrumentality of truth;—a perfect refutation of the notion that regeneration is mere baptism, for how could the *truth* perform a *water baptism.* The "word of truth" is spiritual *light*—divine *teaching*—we are not baptised with this;—we are *regenerated* with this, we are *baptized* with *water.* And so another apostle says, "Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever."† Men are not *baptized* by the word of God—the idea is absurd—but we are here taught that they are *born again*—regenerated—by it, as the instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost. The truth of God is then the instrument, and the Holy Ghost the author, of regeneration.

That we may the more clearly apprehend this divine agency, we will *analyze* it. We find it comprising the following elements. It is,

1. GRACIOUS. It is an agency which God is under no obligation to bestow; our obligation to obey him being entire without it. If your child have a maimed or broken limb, you ought not to require of him the same as if he were sound. But if he has all his physical powers entire, so that nothing is wrong but the disposition, and that disposition is voluntary, you have only to require him to do what is right, and he is guilty if he does not do it. Now obedience to the divine law *is* right, and man has all the natural powers

* James i. 18. † 1 Pet. i. 23.

requisite to obey it. Only his disposition is wrong—he is voluntarily opposed—and therefore his obligation is entire.

Nor is this, as the caviller objects, a mere hair-splitting distinction—a metaphysical subtlety of the schools—to confound, rather than convince. It is a distinction recognized and acted on in all the responsible affairs of life. The man who *might* do well, but is *indisposed* to do so, is pronounced *guilty* by the common consent of the world. Otherwise, domestic rule is tyranny; civil government is oppression; all law is injustice; courts of judgment are but a solemn farce;—we ought to pull down our prisons, and abolish all penalties. We ought to let the world go into anarchy;—and on the same principle, God ought to annihilate the penalty of his law, abolish hell, never call men to judgment, and let the fiery waves of anarchy roll over the universe.

So far is a wrong disposition from excusing men from duty, that the more *indisposed* they are, the more *guilty* they are. Indeed, it is only as they are indisposed, that they are guilty at all. The thief, the liar, the murderer, is guilty, just in the degree that he is *disposed* to be thievish, false, murderous, and *in*disposed to be honest, true humane. The sinner against God is guilty, just in the degree that he is *disposed* to be sinful; and it is *only* because he is indisposed to holiness, that the agency of the Holy Ghost is needed. Hence that agency is entirely *gracious*;—it is an agency to dispose him to do what he ought to do, without it. God would have been perfectly just, if he

had never sent the Holy Ghost into our world, and yet had held all men responsible to obey his holy laws.

The Arminian notion of the Holy Ghost being given to restore lapsed powers, and thus render us *competent* to obey—of a gracious influence, which yet is *not* gracious—is fruitful of loose theology, and looser practice. Let every person consider well, that all the influence which he ever did or ever can receive from the Holy Ghost, to renew and sanctify his soul, is a favor to which he can have no possible claim, and which therefore God may justly withhold, or withdraw, at any moment.

2. RATIONAL. The Holy Ghost acts upon the soul as a rational being. It is one intelligent *Mind* influencing *another* intelligent mind, according to the established laws of mental operation. It is the mind of God acting on the mind of the creature. When the mind of a fellow being is acting upon your mind, you are not conscious of the fact, except in the *effects* produced. You cannot *feel* the immediate influence of that mind; you are conscious of being affected by it, only by the thoughts, desires, volitions, awakened within you. So when that infinite Mind, the Holy Ghost, is operating upon your mind, you are entirely unconscious of it, excepting as your thoughts are awakened, your mind enlightened, your sensibilities quickened, and your will moved, in reference to religion. None of the constitutional laws of your mind are altered or disturbed. You think, feel, will, decide, in matters of religion, just as you do in other matters. The influence of the Holy Ghost upon you is *purely* the influence of mind

on mind ;—it is a *moral* power, and a *moral result*, not a *physical.* God adapts means to ends. No physical *change* is wanted, and hence no physical *agency.* But while the influence of the Holy Ghost upon you, is purely that of one intelligent Spirit upon another, it is not the influence of a created, finite, feeble spirit, but of a Spirit that "*searcheth all things*, yea, the *deep things of God*,"*—of a Spirit whose omniscience knows how to touch all the hidden springs of mind, and is almighty to move them.

That the agency of the Holy Ghost upon the soul is strictly rational, is evident also from his employing the *instrumentality* of *truth.* We all know that truth can have no instrumentality, excepting as it acts upon rational minds in a rational way. The Holy Spirit did not employ truth, when he garnished the heavens,† marshalled the stars, bound the sweet influences of Pleiades, and loosed the bands of Orion. He does not employ truth to beget the dew-drops, to gender the hoary frost, to pile up the dark clouds, as a pavilion about him, to open the bottles of heaven, to shoot the forked lightnings and hurl the red thunder-bolt :— He employs not truth, either to unlock the ice-bands of winter, and spread the soft mantle of green and blooming spring over the earth, or to "guide Arcturus with his sons" on their brilliant march amid the constellations of heaven. All these are *physical* operations. But when he does a *moral* work—when he convinces the soul of sin, righteousness, and a judg-

* 1 Cor. ii. 10. † Job xxvi. 13.

ment to come, and begets it to God, he *does* employ truth :—" Of his own will " begets he it, " *by the word of truth ;*"—and hence the agency of the Spirit in regeneration, unlike his agency in operating on senseless matter, is strictly rational. It is a change wrought by the same almighty Spirit which garnished the heavens, and which raised up Christ from the dead, and is with all propriety called a new *creation ;* but it is a new *moral* creation.

3. SUPERNATURAL. While the influence of the Holy Spirit upon our minds is rational, it is yet supernatural. Such was his influence, when he inspired those who wrote the Bible. He moved upon their minds supernaturally ; and yet in a way strictly accordant with the laws of mental operation, leaving each mind to act out freely its own natural powers. The same is true of his influence in regeneration. In the one case he inspires the mind to write the truth, in the other he renders that truth effectual ; but in each case his influence is supernatural, as well as rational.

By the supernatural agency of the Spirit in regeneration, we mean an agency *over and above* the natural influence of truth. It is the theory of one school, that the Holy Spirit is the author of regeneration *only* as he inspired the truth, by which the change is effected. This is Pelagianism. According to this view, it is only needful to present divine truth to the minds of men, with appropriate clearness, frequency, and quantity, to secure their regeneration. The abettors of this theory, however, usually make very little of regeneration, and consider conversions, revivals, and all other manifesta-

tions of a supernatural influence, as mere fanatical excitement. But this theory cannot be sustained. The Holy Spirit was promised by Christ to descend, not merely to bring all things to the remembrance of the apostles, and thus inspire them to write the Scriptures, but to "*abide*" with man, "to reprove *the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"* This, you observe, is an entirely different thing from the gift of inspiration. To inspire men to write the truth, is one thing; to render that truth effectual in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, is quite another. The man who cannot see this distinction, should not undertake to be a religious teacher. And Christ said, that "except a man be *born of the Spirit*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."† The invisible Spirit, in the absence of Christ's visible person, was promised to accompany the truth through all ages of time, and render it effectual to the enlightening, renewing, sanctifying, and comforting of men. Accordingly the revivals of religion recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and the cases of regeneration referred to in the Epistles, are ascribed to the promised agency of the Holy Ghost. The same Spirit, given in answer to prayer, agreeably to Christ's promise, has continued in the world to this hour; and all true spiritual religion on the earth is the result of his supernatural agency. Pure revivals of religion, therefore, are at an infinite remove from fanatical excitement;—they are the solemn *work of God.* Predicting the age of millen-

* John xvi. 8. † John iii. 5.

nial glory, the prophet says that the influences of the Spirit shall descend in abundant measure,—that He shall come down like rain on mown grass, like showers that water the earth.*

4. DIRECT. When you accomplish an object by the agency of another, you do it *indirectly*; when in your own person, *directly*. It is an indirect murder, when you engage a second person to slay your enemy; direct, when you take the sword in hand, and do it yourself. The "word of God is the sword of the Spirit;"†—taking this word in hand, the Spirit goes with it "in his own person" directly to the sinner's heart, slays his enmity, and accomplishes the work of regeneration.

Those who maintain that the agency of the Spirit is only *indirect*, suppose that all he does is to secure the right presentation of the *truth* to the mind. They suppose that the truth is adequate to the regeneration of a soul, if it can only be properly presented. Such persons tell us that *all* the Holy Ghost does is to assist in *pouring in the truth*. This is the *moral suasion* scheme. Now we fully believe that the Holy Ghost does this; and we believe that he *also* does *more*. The theory which restricts his agency to that of mere moral suasion, supposes such a correlativeness between the motives of truth and the sinner's heart, that it is only needful to present the truth, with a certain clearness and vigor, to have it take effect. Whereas, the heart is *opposed* to the truth;—and it often happens, that the

* Ps. lxxii. 6. † Eph. vi. 17.

more clearly truth is made to shine, the more the heart resists it. For instance, the more vividly are made to appear the guilt and condemnation of sin, the nature and extent of depravity, the demands and penalties of the divine law, and the way of salvation by grace, the greater is the felt hostility to these soul-humbling truths. So that something *more* is wanted than moral suasion—something to *subdue that hostility*, and thus give the motives success. Now the Holy Spirit does that something more:—He goes *with* the truth to the heart as a *mediator*, to give it favor:—He so acts upon the heart as to effect a *reconciliation* between it and the truth. We all know how feeble is a message sent forth in a letter alone to gain the assent of a man, compared with that letter accompanied by your own person. In the one case, it is only a dead and dry letter; in the other, it is attended with the subduing power of a living and feeling *mind*, acting directly on mind.

While holding up the truth before the heart in its intrinsic reasonableness and excellence, in its convincing light and authority, the Holy Spirit also so beats upon that hard heart with the direct and subduing impulses of his *own* compassion, he so breathes into that cold heart the warm breath of his *own* love, he so infuses into that selfish heart the generous kindlings of his *own* benevolence, that the heart awakes to newness of life, begins to partake of the feelings of the Holy Ghost, and therefore to accord the truth which he inspired. Thus is a sympathy begotten between the heart and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost does not go *before* the truth, or *without* it,

but *with* it—with his own instrument in hand, he goes to make it take effect in the heart. So that he is the author of regeneration, not merely in the secondary and indirect sense of assisting to *present* the truth, but also in the *direct* sense of making that truth effectual. This is the plain and positive teaching of Scripture:—"Of his own will begat he us, *with the word of truth.*" "Except a man be *born of the Spirit,* he cannot see the kingdom of God," although the truth be made to shine upon his soul with the light of seven suns. Even the blaze of eternity will never be able to call up in the unregenerate soul one holy affection. Hence the absence of the Spirit is inevitable ruin.

5. SPECIAL. Some suppose that there is no speciality in the Spirit's agency, but that he always influences, or is ready to influence, all minds alike. This is the Arminian theory. I beg your particular attention to this point. It marks one important boundary line between a loose and a sound theology. This Arminian theory is not sustained, as we conceive, either by the analogies of providence, or the teachings of the Bible, or experience. Not by the analogies of providence, for there are marked specialities here. The seasons of the year; the frosts, and rains, and sunbeams; the calms, and winds; and all the affairs of men,—have their specialities. The world of providence is not one smooth and glassy sea, and one changeless sky above it, so that the mariner on life's voyage has but one thing to do, and the same result always follows. There are indeed uniform *laws*, but they do not operate in this way. Neither is this theory

sustained by the *Bible;* for the apostles were sometimes commanded to *wait* for the Spirit, as the mariner in a calm must wait for the wind to fill his sails:—thus Christ told them to remain in Jerusalem, till special effusions of the Spirit should be given them.* And it is evident that there was a special influence of the Spirit in the conversion of Paul, in the revivals recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and in every instance of success attending apostolic labors. To this influence the apostles ascribed all the glory of their success:—He that planted, they said, was nothing, and he that watered nothing, but God that gave the increase. And to this same special influence are we taught to look, as our only hope of success in laboring for the salvation of men. All genuine revivals are as truly now, as in apostolic times, the result of special effusions of the Spirit. They are not of man, but of God,—not of earth, but of heaven.

No better sustained is this theory by *experience.* The soul of every Christian has its seasons of special refreshing from on high,—refreshings that he is constrained to say come purely of sovereign grace, not of any thing that he has done. And there are times when Christians put forth great efforts for a revival of religion, without success; while at other times the same efforts result in a glorious harvest:—just as at sea, the mariner may sometimes set his sails well, and do his very best, and yet make no progress; when at other times the same means waft him gaily to port.

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* Luke xxiv. 49.

Nor does this militate against the great law, which connects diligence in the right use of means with success. It only militates against the *presumption* of limiting the vision to *immediate* results. God sees farther than we do; and what we call disappointment, may in his eye be the means of the greatest ultimate good. A calm at sea, when the impatient mariner, if he could have *his* way, would be going ahead, may in the eye of God be the means of eventually saving the ship. The general law is, that taking a series of years together, the mariner, the husbandman, the mechanic, the professional man, who is on the whole most faithful in the right use of means, will on the whole realize most success. So it is with churches and pastors, in their labors for the salvation of men. This is their encouragement. They that go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, will doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. And so, too, every individual, in the matter of his own salvation, is authorized to expect it only as he avails himself, with all diligence, of the Spirit's gracious presence—*strives* to enter in at the straight gate—seeks the Lord while he may be found, and calls upon him while he is near;—just as the mariner must catch the propitious breeze, the harvest-man the sun-beams, the merchant his opportunity, or fail of success. In fact, this very doctrine of speciality, thoroughly understood, is one of the strongest confirmations of the fact, that only the "*diligent soul shall be made fat.*"

The denial of speciality in the Spirit's influence, leads to great practical evils. It leads the sinner to

think that his salvation is entirely in his own hands,—that whenever he shall choose to wake up and become a Christian, the Spirit is at his option—ever the same—and that therefore it is perfectly safe, the accidents of mortality apart, to put off religion till the last moment. Equally pernicious is the effect on churches. It leads them to put off God to their own convenience; to neglect present duties and opportunities; to calculate on periodical revivals, at the times when they have most leisure and inclination to work; and at such times to place undue reliance on extraordinary measures and highly exciting means, to the neglect of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Spirit is grieved. Nor is this all;—in case their measures do not succeed, they feel disappointed; disappointment produces irritation; and the inquiry is raised, Who is to blame? There is always sin enough, doubtless, in the best of churches, to distance the Holy Spirit, if his only rule of blessing were human desert;—but it were quite as wrong, presumptuously to ascribe the absence of a revival to some special misdoing of members of the church, or of the pastor, as to ascribe the absence of propitious gales at sea to some special misdoing of members of the crew, or of the captain, and to agitate thereupon the inquiry, Who shall be thrown overboard? God may see other reasons than special blameworthiness in Christians, for withholding from sinners regenerating grace,—reasons in the sinners themselves, who have perhaps long resisted his Spirit,—reasons in the peculiar position of the church; reasons in view of distant results, seen only by the eye of omniscience. These reasons may

respect the ultimate good of the church itself, which God is humbling, and teaching that lesson of dependence on him, which is ever the forerunner of good. The grace of a meek and quiet, of an humble and dependent spirit, is as important as that of bold and tireless activity.

Christians should therefore ever keep their minds clear of all irritation, impatience, censoriousness; they should maintain sweetness, gentleness, and kindness of spirit;—they should see to it, with severe self-inspection, that nothing is wanting on their part, and then wait patiently on God.

If it is evil to *go before* the Spirit, it is equally evil to follow tardily *behind* him. Had the Israelites gone *before* the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, or had they followed at a tardy pace *behind*, they would in either case have been lost in the wilderness. Churches and pastors should ever seek to be *led* by the Spirit;—they should keep hold of his hand, and never let him go from them;—they should cherish towards him a lively tenderness, and a deep sense of dependence;—they should ever feel that they are in a wilderness, and shall be hopelessly lost without him;—they should carefully eye his movements, notice the signs of the times, seize every opportunity, and be equally anxious to be neither too fast nor too slow. There is no practical difficulty here, if they honestly seek to walk in the Spirit—and to wait only upon God, making his glory the great end of their being.

6. UNRESISTED. It seems more scriptural to say that the Holy Ghost is *unresisted*, than *irresistible*. For the Scriptures teach us that sinners can and do resist him. "Ye stiff necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears," said an apostle, "ye do *always resist* the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."* But in all cases where the agency of the Holy Ghost is effectual to the regeneration of a soul, he ceases to be resisted. An irresistible agency carries the idea of *force—violence*—as though the sinner were taken captive *against his will*. No man becomes a Christian thus. This is not the way of the Spirit. He renews the *will itself*. Instead of forcing the soul, with an irresistible agency, he removes its disposition to resist, and is therefore no longer resisted. His influence on the soul, instead of being imperative, violent, irresistible, is gentle, tender, winning. It is a work of *love*, not of *authority*. Indeed *all* his influences are kind, sweet, subduing,—he woos, wins, captivates,—he draws with chords of love, the bands of a man.† He is not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the *still small voice*:—It is the soft and gentle whisper of Spirit with spirit. It is the Holy Ghost, all compassionate, tender, dove-like, enfolding the rebel spirit in his arms, pressing it to his bosom, and breathing his own love into it. Never is a person more conscious of having no force or violence exerted upon him—of being more entirely free and voluntary—than when under the influences of the Holy Ghost.

* Acts vii. 51. † Hosea xi. 4.

The Holy Ghost works none the less mightily, for working gently and lovingly;—the most mighty agencies are the most gentle in operation. This is especially true in the *moral* world. Suppose a monarch had sent down to you from his throne the stern voice of authority, demanding your submission. We will suppose he has a *right* to demand this, for you are an unreasonable rebel. But you brace yourself against him—you will not submit. Instead of resorting to violence, with infinite condescension he leaves his throne, comes to you, clasps you in his arms and presses you to his heart, with the winning look of forgiveness and love. Your opposition is gone—your heart yields—you love and obey.

This is the way of the Holy Ghost. What the stern voice of law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, the Holy Ghost accomplishes in his own person. He does not come merely to pour light into your mind, or to assist in doing it, but to *embrace* and *subdue* you, by making you feel the warm beatings of his own heart. So gently is the change wrought, that, oftener than otherwise, the subject of it cannot tell when it was. As Christ said, he cannot tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes. Some how or other he feels differently respecting religion from what he did. His opposition is gone;—his shame is gone;—his indecision is gone;—his unbelief is gone;—his burden is gone;—he cannot tell how. But this he knows, that they went away without any violence;—there was no shock;—no forcible bolting in at the door. An angel form, in kind and winning tones, said,

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me."* Somehow or other he was inclined to open the door;—Christ came in,—he embraced him,—friendship was declared, and the feast of eternal love began. In place of opposition, there is now a cordial welcome; in place of shame, glorying in Christ; in place of sickly indecision, a firm and manly purpose; in place of unbelief, the confiding trust of a little child; in place of that burden, peace and rest. This is the charming, the sweet, the beautiful work of the Holy Spirit. Do you see any thing like an *irresistible* agency here, in the physical sense of that word?—No; but you see an *unresisted* agency;—you see something that removes the disposition to resist, and thus makes the sinner *willing* in the day of its power.

7. ABUNDANT. "By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us *abundantly*."† God has made all things abundant in their place, and for their intended object. Scarcity implies something *wrong*. Primeval paradise brought forth *abundantly* of all the beauties and sweets of nature; and the original sources of abundance still remain, only disturbed in their operations by sin. The *great* laws and movements of nature, that are as it were above the *reach* of the catastrophe, still unfailingly exhibit the same abundance. It is with no measured hand that God pours out the light, the air,

* Rev. iii. 20. † Titus iii. 6.

the water:—how abundantly do the beams of the sun flood the face of the earth, with their golden splendors—how sufficient for the object for which they are sent:—how abundantly does the atmosphere surround the globe, giving breath to all the living:—how abundantly do the waters fill the seas, and roll in eternal fulness on their pathless channels. Such is the generosity, the profusion, of the divine nature. God knows nothing of parsimony. He gives as one that can well afford; he gives liberally. Nothing but sin can dry up, or diminish, the streams of his bounty. The sinless angels, and the redeemed in glory, expatiate in an ocean of abundance. They know that their king is infinitely rich and generous;—they therefore expect much, and they receive it.

Sin cuts man off from this expectation, and it is the hardest thing in the world to restore it unto him. No point does God reason with him more earnestly:—He tells him that the gospel has removed all obstacles to his dealing again with him on *generous* terms;—that if he will now return to him, his heart and hand shall be again opened, and the abundance of paradise shall again be given;—he says to him, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will *abundantly* pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than

the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

The influence of the Spirit, therefore, given as the price of Christ's death to regenerate the soul, is given *abundantly* for this end :—it is God's own gift, and he gives like a God. And to all who have received any measure of renewing grace, and would receive more, he says, "According to your *faith*, be it unto you." The influences of the Spirit will be shed down more and more abundantly, as the faith of God's people increases, until the whole earth shall be filled with his glory as the waters fill the sea.

We have thus shown that the Holy Ghost is the author of regeneration, and that his agency upon the soul is gracious, rational, supernatural, direct, special, unresisted, and abundant.

In the view we have taken, it is the most beautiful and benign of all the works of God ;—it exhibits a reach of wisdom and love, which leaves all his doings in the natural creation far behind. When the earth and heavens rose from chaos into order, and put on their robes of light, it was befitting that the morning stars should sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy ;—but when an immortal soul rises from the deeper chaos of sin into the image of God, and puts on the shining robes of his Saviour, it is befitting that joy in the presence of the angels of God should strike up a yet *louder* anthem of praise. Accordingly God says of the kingdom of the redeemed, "Behold, I

* Isaiah lv. 7.

create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall *not be remembered,* nor *come into mind.*"* Thus, in the judgment of God himself, does the work of regeneration eclipse the glories of his first creation.

Wonderful indeed it was, when this huge and sightless mass was moved upon by the almighty energies of the Spirit; when its desolate chambers of night were unlocked, and became the joyful abodes of light, life, and beauty;—but more wonderful is it, when the human soul, from the ruins of sin, is re-wrought, enlightened, adorned, to be a blissful and everlasting temple of the Holy Ghost. The glories of the first creation will hereafter fade;—but the glories of the second, never. The first creation will wax old, like a garment; as a vesture will God change it, and it shall be changed;—but the second creation will never wax old, never be changed. High above the stars, on a throne of light, in God's own blissful presence, where change and disaster never come, will the regenerate soul forever sit, looking serenely down upon the ashes of the universe, reflecting the beauties of the Spirit's noblest work, and shouting the praises of Him who hath said, "HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, SHALL NEVER DIE."

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* Isaiah lxv. 17.

CHAPTER XI.

JUSTIFICATION.

NEXT in order after regeneration, comes the doctrine of *justification.* Christians are not only *renewed;* they are *justified.* Addressing the members of the Corinthian church, St. Paul says, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are *justified,* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* They were not *sinless;* for the apostle had just administered a *rebuke* to them, and had told them, "There is utterly a *fault* among you." Yet they were in a justified state. In another place, the same apostle says, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also *justified;* and whom he justified, them he also glorified."† Justification is then something interposing, in this golden chain of salvation, between effectual calling, or regeneration, and glorification.

It is the object of this chapter to illustrate its nature, its ground, and its condition.

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* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † Rom. viii. 30.

1. ITS NATURE. The word *justify* is borrowed from civil courts. It denotes the decision of a judge, whose prerogative it is to make an authoritative declaration respecting subjects of law. In its primary sense, it denotes the innocence of its subject, as well as his acquittal. But Christians sustain to the divine government the relation not only of *accountable* beings, but of *sinners*. What then can be meant by *their* being justified? How can God declare *sinners* to be just? I answer:—Justification, in a theological sense, is either legal or evangelical;—legal, as applied to sinless beings, like the holy angels; evangelical, as applied to those whose righteousness is of Christ. Men are justified at human tribunals, because they are proved innocent; but justification by the gospel supposes no such thing. On the contrary, it is written, "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that *every mouth may be stopped.*"* Although Christians are justified by God, they do not justify themselves; which they would do, and *ought* to do, if they were innocent. "If I should justify myself," said the most perfect man that ever lived—God himself being judge—"my own lips would condemn me; if I should say I am righteous, that also would prove me perverse."†

Evangelical justification is an act of God's free grace, in which he pardons the sins of the regenerate, and accepts them as righteous, in and through the righteousness of Christ. This is the strictly scriptural

* Rom. iii. 19. † Job ix. 20.

view. "The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification."* "There is therefore now no *condemnation* to them that are *in Christ Jesus.*"† In the matter of justification, then, Christians are "not under law, but under grace." Yet they are not exonerated from obeying the law. On the contrary, it is only as they are in spirit endeavoring after obedience to the law, that they are not the condemned and death-bound servants of sin. It is only they who "*walk* not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," for whom there is no condemnation. "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"—"Do we then make void the law, through faith? God forbid. Yea we *establish* the law."‡ Evangelical justification does not imply that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to Christians in the sense of actually considering them holy, but that he accepts them in Christ *as though* they *were* holy. And to avoid antinomian abuses, we are expressly taught that the law, as our rule of duty, is still in force; and hence, before we can enjoy that highest state of divine approval—*glorification*—into which the regenerate will enter hereafter, we must become perfected in holiness, as the law requires. Hence evangelical justification expresses the condition of a *probationer*, already received into divine favor, anticipat-

* Rom. v. 16. † Rom. viii. 1. ‡ Rom. iii. 31.

ing the glorified state, when he shall be cleansed from all sin and be presented *faultless* before the throne of God with exceeding joy."*

Christians being thus justified subjects of grace, and it being the object of Christ, who has taken upon himself the responsibility of their sins, to exalt them to perfect holiness, just in the degree that they become obedient to the law do they please Christ and gain evidence of being truly his. In this view, the doctrine of evangelical justification, so far from encouraging sin, presents the most powerful of all inducements to personal holiness.

II. Its ground. By the ground of justification is meant its *meritorious basis*. It is that which, in justice and equity, *deserves* and *sustains* it. Can this be deeds of the law?—that is, acts of obedience to the law performed by men. Some say it is;—and when pressed with the argument that all have sinned, and therefore cannot deserve salvation, they evade, by saying the law does not require perfect obedience;—that God makes allowance for our being frail and imperfect creatures, and accepts of an imperfect service. I shall not stop to argue the utter incompatibility of this notion with a righteous moral government—a point fully demonstrable—but meet the error at once with the plain declaration of God's word:—"*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*"†

Can works of *supererogation* be a ground of justification? Some think they can. While they admit

* Jude 24. † Rom. iii. 20.

that men sometimes fall short of the law's requirements, they claim that they may also at other times do *more* than the law requires, and so set off the one against the other. We have two replies;—first, no man *can* ever do *better* than the law requires. To suppose that he can, is to suppose the law imperfect. Secondly, deeds of supererogation are themselves bad deeds. They are not what the law requires, but something else. They make *void* the law, instead of honoring it. Deeds of supererogation cannot, therefore, constitute for us a meritorious basis of justification.

Can *repentance* do it? Strangely have not a few supposed it can. But was the government ever known in which repentance was an admitted ground of justification? No government could stand a day on this principle. Repentance can neither undo the evil done, nor restore the good lost, nor honor the broken law, nor represent the penalty deserved. Hence a righteous moral government could not possibly admit it as a meritorious basis of pardon. While the Scriptures enjoin repentance, they no where teach that repentance merits forgiveness. The idea indulged of meritorious repentance, *vitiates the repentance itself.* It is not and cannot be a genuine repentance, that supposes itself deserving of favor. Self-justifying repentance is mockery and rebellion.

Thus are we driven by necessity to the *atonement of Christ.* This we believe to be the true and only meritorious ground of our acceptance with God. This so magnifies for us the law which we have broken, that we may plead it before the throne of justice with entire

assurance and build our immortal hopes upon it. We then plead something which God has done, not we—an atonement made by *him*, not ourselves, as the foundation of our pardon. This makes us feel that sin is an evil which *we* cannot atone for; cuts us off from all dependance upon our own merits; and casts us at once and completely upon the sole but sufficient righteousness of God. Every believer has thus "a perfect righteousness, yet not his own; that it is not his own, precludes all boasting; that it is perfect, precludes all anxiety. The conscience is unladen, without becoming puffed up."* In this view, all the ancient saints plead the righteousness of God, not their own. "We make mention of *thy* righteousness, even of *thine only*," was ever the spirit of their address to God. And what *is* this righteousness of God, which the saints of the Old Testament plead as the basis of their acceptance? Let the apostle answer—"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare *his righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,—to declare, I say, at this time *his righteousness*, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."† "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by *his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him."‡

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* Luther. † Rom. iii. 26. ‡ Rom. v. 8.

These are only specimens of the numerous Scriptures, which set forth, with equal explicitness, the Christian atonement as the meritorious basis of our justification. Let every person beware, then, lest he fall fatally into the condemnation of those who, "being ignorant of *God's* righteousness, and going about to establish their *own* righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

III. Its CONDITION. The question is, what is the precise thing which the sinner must do, to place himself on this ground of acceptance with God?

The Romanist says, we are justified by *penance*. Or, if he admits faith in Christ as a condition, it is so buried under a superincumbent mass of human devices, as to be scarcely discernible. To vary the figure, faith in Christ is with him only an element, so diluted with foreign ingredients, that its efficacy is destroyed. The whole system of indulgencies is a device of papacy to enrich its coffers, by easing the consciences of men with a spurious justification. Where in all God's word are we taught that we are justified by penance? On the contrary, we are commanded to do ourselves no harm, and are admonished that were we to give rivers of oil, and the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls, they would avail nothing.†

Some have maintained that we are justified by *baptism*.‡ This they consider the grand element of that conditional obedience, which places us in a saving

* Rom. x. 3. † Mich. vi. 7.

‡ See Newman on Justification, and Oxford Tracts.

relation to Christ. But one is exceedingly puzzled to find the place in the Bible, where this is taught. Indeed they do not profess to deduce this sentiment so much from the Bible, as from the church; and that, unfortunately for the truth's sake, after the church had become corrupted.

There are more yet, who believe that we are justified partly by faith in Christ, and partly by good works. They suppose that the righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith, does a part of what needs to be done for our salvation, leaving our own good works to make up the deficiency. On this principle the redeemed saint in heaven must divide the praise of his salvation between Christ and himself, dealing out the larger portion to the one or to the other, according as his vanity shall rise or fall. Having sung the hymn of praise to the Lamb, who hath redeemed us to God by his blood, he must then turn and sing another, which John did not hear, to his own good works.

It was this notion of dividing with Christ, in the matter of our justification, that so bewitched the Galatians, as to call forth the most stirring energies of the inspired pen. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"*

* Gal. iii. 1.

In lofty eminence above all these schemes, whether entire or mixed, stands the true scriptural doctrine, *that Christians are justified alone by faith in Christ. Faith only* is that which places them in a justified state. It is that *with* which they are wholly justified; and in the *absence* of which, wholly condemned. This can be said of nothing else. A man may be baptized; he may do penance; practice sanctimonious ablutions, repeat paternosters, and macerate with fastings; he may perform the deeds of law, and practice the social virtues, with great exactness; he may be a distinguished philanthropist; he may even give all his goods to feed the poor and his body to be burned,—and yet, until he takes himself completely off from all these, and all his other doings, as a ground of dependance, and places himself solely on the righteousness of God in Christ, he is in an unjustified state. God is dissatisfied; the penalty of the law lies against him; Christ is grieved, the cross offended; and all heaven looks mournfully upon him, as a thief and a robber, who would climb up some other way.* But no sooner does he cease from all these false dependences, and place himself by faith on the atonement of Christ alone, than God is satisfied; the penalty of the law removed; Christ well pleased, the cross honored; and all heaven rejoices over him as a redeemed and loyal heir of glory.

Let us now educe a few samples of Scripture, in proof of this doctrine of justification by faith. "We

* John x. 1.

are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare *his* righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,—to declare I say at this time *his* righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified *by faith*, without the deeds of the law."*

"Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that *believe* are *justified* from *all* things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets:—Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."†—A caution which we do well to consider! The apostle declares, experimentally, this doctrine of justification by faith, the foundation of peace, and of triumphant, glorious joy. "Therefore, being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him."‡

Having set forth the righteousness of God in Christ as the only foundation of hope, and declared that even

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* Rom. v. 15. † Acts xiii. 40, 41. ‡ Rom. v. 1, 2, 9.

an angel from heaven is not to be received, if he preach any other doctrine, the apostle says, "Knowing that a man is *not* justified by *the works of the law*, but by the *faith of Jesus Christ*, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be *justified by the faith of Christ*, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall *no flesh be justified.*"* And to show the beautiful operation of this law of faith in Christ, the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I *live by faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."† As much as to say, all who seek to be justified in any *other* way than by faith in Christ, *do* frustrate the grace of God; for them Christ *has* died in vain. They do virtually set him at naught. Referring to Abraham, in the case of the atoning lamb which typified the Lamb of God, the apostle says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under

* Gal. ii. 16. † Gal. ii. 20, 21.

the curse;—for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for the *just shall live by faith.*"—"If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to *them that believe.*"—"The law was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, *that we might be justified by faith.*"*

To deduce more Scriptures in proof of our doctrine, were superfluous. He who is not convinced by these, disclaims all confidence in this source of evidence.

Let us now consider the *superiority* of this over every other way of justification.

1. Faith in Christ is the *generic grace.* It is the great central virtue. Confidence in God is the almighty law of heaven. It is the gravitating power, which binds together the celestial hierarchies, as they revolve in their orbits around the everlasting throne. We are sometimes told that there is no faith in heaven, for faith is lost in sight. But no such doctrine is taught in the Bible. On the contrary, faith is *perfected* in heaven;—and it is the great end of God, in our probation, to *recover* in us this principle, which was lost by the fall, that we may be *prepared* for heaven. It was from defect of faith, that Lucifer with his train

* Gal. iii,

fell; and so sure as the redeemed from earth are confirmed in glory, they are perfected and confirmed in faith. It is the security of the heaven of the redeemed, that God will be by them never again doubted. Although they see clouds and darkness round about him; although they see a world on fire; although they look down from their shining battlements, and see the smoke of the torments of the wicked ascending up forever and ever,—yet will not the harmonies of those notes be disturbed, which ever spring afresh and swell into rapture from confidence in God:—Still does faith sweetly sing, and sing forever, "Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

Now evangelical faith is *this same principle*, in the mind of the sinner, *directed to his Saviour*. It is *confidence in God* as a REDEEMING GOD,—just the confidence which the sinner needs. It is sometimes called the *instrument*, which lays hold of and appropriates the righteousness of Christ to the nourishment of the soul, like that with which we receive our food.† It does indeed lay hold of and appropriate the righteousness of Christ, but it is something *more* than a mere *instrument*. It is a living and glorious GRACE—itself a moral virtue, and the enthroned queen of all other virtues.

2. Faith in Christ is the *antagonist of all sin*.

There is no one sin of the human heart, which this does not tend to expel. It begins with subjecting the creature to God. The wisdom, the will, the righteousness, of the creature, are by it all renounced, and

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* Rev. xix. 6. † Alexander.

the wisdom, the will, the righteousness, of God, set up in the soul. Thus pride, vanity, selfishness,—those master-passions of unregeneracy—are by it wounded unto death. From the moment faith in Christ begins to live, these begin to die. The lower vices—the vices of the flesh—receive their death-wound from the same source. Looking by faith on the agonies of Gethsemane and the blood of Calvary, brings upon them a shaming and withering rebuke, and calls up in the regenerate soul the noble purpose—

> "Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die;
> My heart has so decreed;—
> Nor will I spare those guilty sins,
> Which made my Saviour bleed."

It is impossible to make a righteousness of faith in Christ; for the very *nature* of faith in Christ implies a *renunciation of all righteousness but his.* A self-righteous faith in Christ, is an impossibility. We might as well speak of a square circle, or of a long point. No *other* proposed means of justification can claim this. It *is* possible to make a righteousness of baptism, of supererogation, of penance, of deeds of law. There is not necessarily in these, as in the case of faith, any going out of self to Christ. They may therefore be substituted, in the place of Christ's righteousness, as the foundation of hope; and when not preceded and dictated by faith in Christ, they do so. In the language of the apostle, they "*frustrate the grace of God.*"* Hence, in the matter of justification, they must all be

* Gal. ii. 21.

swept away, and the guilty soul must go forth as a beggar, naked and alone, without money and without price, to embrace the righteousness of Christ. It must be completely justified without these, or it is not justified at all. Christian ordinances and deeds of law, however important in their place, are quite *out* of their place, when made the condition of justification. Thus does justification by faith take the very citadel of sin—self-righteousness—and having entered the castle and bound the strong man, it has only to go on establishing its dominion and perfecting its work, until every enemy shall be forever expelled.

3. Faith in Christ is the *producer* of all other graces. As it kills every sin, so it brings into existence every virtue. In the language of the apostle, it "*works by love and purifies the heart.*" It is an *active* principle :—It "*works.*" And it works ever with its kindred grace—its first born child. It works by *love.* When a man has truly given himself by faith into the hands of Christ, he truly *loves* him ; and loving Christ, he loves his cause and his people. The liveliest and deepest sympathies of his nature go over to *him,* with whom he has embarked his eternal interests. Faith in Christ also produces *gratitude.* No sooner does faith receive the blessings of redeeming love, than the soul feels a sense of gratitude to him who hath redeemed it to God by his blood. The same faith produces also meekness, humility, peace, joy, hope, forgiveness, spiritual mindedness, and every heaven-born affection. As faith itself is of heaven, so all its works are heavenly. Now this is something

which baptism, penance, supererogation, works of law, and the like, cannot do. Hence the apostle says, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision *availeth* any thing, nor uncircumcision any thing; but *faith which worketh by love.*"* When justifying faith in Christ is exercised, and vigorously maintained, all the other graces will as invariably follow as effects in nature follow their appropriate causes. Not more sure is the rising of the sun to produce light, and the warm beams and showers to revive the vegetable creation, than is the dawn of justifying faith in the soul to cause all the graces of piety to spring up and grow.

4. Faith in Christ as the condition of justification, *gives all the glory of our salvation to God.* No other condition does this. The very idea of faith implies a going out of ourselves, and an acknowledging of Christ as the source of all our hopes. It turns away the eye, the finger, and the tongue, from all other objects, and directs them to Christ alone. It fills the eye with Christ, and only Christ, as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of salvation;—it points the finger to Christ, and only to Christ, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;—it raises the song of praise to Christ, and only to Christ, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and honor, and glory, and thanksgiving, and praise, for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."† Now whether this is excellent or not, it is surely scriptural;—and truly it is very excellent.

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* Gal. v. 6. † Rev. v. 9.

It *is* indeed excellent for the sinner thus to have his pride abased, his self-glorying destroyed, his own righteousness cast away as filthy rags,* and to come with a heart to ascribe all praise to whom alone praise is due, and put on the entire and shining robes of his Saviour. This is the very spirit of Christianity ;—this is the Christian's glory.

5. This condition of justification is *of universal practicability.* All can *understand* it. It requires no uncommon depth of wisdom, or extent of knowledge,—no Plato, to thread the mysteries of transcendental science ; no Newton, to scale the heavens ; no Locke, to explore the labyrinths of the human understanding. "The word of faith, which we preach, *is nigh, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.*"† It is as near the unlearned as the learned, and as easily understood by the one as by the other. Indeed it often happens, that the most unlearned learn this sublimest of all knowledge first; and thus does God herein confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to naught the understanding of the prudent.

Nor does it require maturity of years. The lisping infant can understand it, just as well as the man on whose head have lighted the frosts of three score winters. The excellent Richard Cecil could teach it to his little child, as effectually as to the ripest heads of his intelligent congregation.‡ The ignorant and the learned, the young and the old, meet together here ; and, as if to make it sure that the latter have no

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* Isa. lxiv. 6. † Rom. x. 8. ‡ See Cecil's Remains.

advantage, the former not unfrequently are first to win the prize. And while the elemental principle of faith is thus apprehensible by the youngest and the feeblest mind, it opens the way into fields of thought wide as eternity, on which an angel's intellect may gather fruit forever. O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

As all can understand this condition of justification, so all can *comply* with it. It demands only what every person can *do, at once,* in all possible conditions of life. No long pilgrimage is demanded,—no price to be paid,—no penalty borne,—no burden to be assumed,—no preparation to be made. All things are ready, and alike ready, for every man. The humble fisherman mending his nets, the tax-gatherer sitting at the receipt of custom, the dying thief on the cross, the publican in the temple, the proud pharisee on his journey of persecution, the keeper of the jail in the midnight vigils, and the thousands convened on the joyous pentecostal day, could all with equal ease and convenience comply with this condition of justification. All could at once believe and live. This condition is alike adapted to all climes, ages, classes, and governments. The ignorant and conceited subject of the Celestial Empire, the haughty Brahmin of India, the turbaned and bloody Turk, the wild Indian of the forest, the hardy and fierce Siberian, wandering amid polar snows, and the poor Hottentot, scorched and withered with the suns of everlasting summer, may all unite with the privileged subjects of more enlightened and civilized nations in complying with this gracious overture of the gospel. Thus within

the ability of all to understand and embrace, it is adapted to go, as on angel-wing, through all the earth, to light the star of hope on every land, and to kindle the torch of salvation in all the habitations of men.

6. The excellence of this condition of justification has been *gloriously tested by its fruits.* Noah, Abraham, all the patriarchs, Moses, David, the prophets, the apostle tells us, were justified by this condition.* And what names are these? They mark the only brilliant spots in the early pages of the world's history;—they are the stars of earth's twilight—the heralds of day to subsequent nations. Where had *we* been, but for *them?*

Observe, too, how this doctrine wrought in apostolic times. It was this doctrine of faith in Christ as the condition of justification, that made the apostles what they were. It was this that faced down the proud Sanhedrim and displaced the cumbrous mass of human traditions and gorgeous ceremonies, for the pure and filial worship of the living God. It was this, that struck the note of salvation so deeply on the day of Pentecost, that it vibrated as in a moment through thousands of hearts, of all nations;—it was this, that preached so eloquently on Mars hill, in presence of the congregated and frowning wisdom of Greece;—it was this, that went fearlessly into the very palace of the Cæsars, and demanded, yes, and *obtained*, too, higher honors for the cross of Jesus, than theirs—a richer crown for the "Man of sorrows" than they wore. It was this that

* Rom. iv. 2. Heb. xi.

razed, from their deep foundations, the temples of idolatry; that carried the tidings of redemption even into the dark regions of Germany, and Gaul, and Britain, and thus introduced to our world a new and bright era.

As idolatry cannot stand before this doctrine, neither can the corruptions of Christianity. For when the heathenism of Rome had amalgamated with the Christian religion, and thus shrouded the earth in the night of ages, then it was that this doctrine rose from the dead, put off its grave-clothes, and in the persons of the illustrious reformers, went forth to regenerate the nations. With the resurrection of this doctrine, the church of Christ arose, put off her sackcloth and her slumbers, and went forth, clothed with sunbeams, to meet the bridegroom. Papal impositions were confounded; corruptions and superstitions, that had long cruelly held the minds of men, as with serpent folds, unclenched their grasp, and fled abashed;—man again walked at liberty, and the pure religion of heaven again descended sweetly and sat dove-like on his heart. Well might Luther call this the "articulum stantis seu cadentis ecclesiae,"—the article of a standing or of a falling church. With the renovation of the church, through the power of this doctrine, the intellect of the world was aroused; the heart of man began to beat with a new and more vigorous pulsation, and all the energies of his nature awoke to nobler activity.

At this very hour, the individuals, the churches, the communities, most cordially wedded to this doctrine, are the purest and brightest lights of Christianity, and

are doing most to extend its triumphs over the earth. And what is so excellent in life, is equally excellent in death. It is this, emphatically, that enables the Christian to read his

> ——"title clear,
> To mansions in the skies."

Approaching the grave divested of self-righteousness, turning entirely away from all false foundations, and resting by faith on the *righteousness of Christ alone*, he feels his foot planted firmly on a rock. Although the billows of death rise high, and its dark waters roll over him, faith anchors his soul on Christ and defies them all. He goes forth solitary, but undaunted, to the last great conflict, knowing that neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, will be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.* His intelligent and manly faith, his calm depth of purpose, his clearness and reach of vision, his hope full of immortality, afford an exhibition of moral beauty and sublimity unequalled on the earth. All other religions are put to shame here,—the philosophies of the schools are confounded,—the wise men and the learned of the earth, equally with the simple and the ignorant, wonder what it means. Here is the explanation, in a single sentence: "*This is the victory that overcometh the world*, EVEN OUR FAITH." It is a cordial and implicit faith in Christ, as an all-justifying Saviour, that subdues every

* Rom. viii. 39.

foe, conquers death and hell, and places the crown of everlasting life on the victor's brow.

Have you, reader, this faith? If you have, you are rich indeed. However poor in this world, you are an heir, a prince of a kingdom, in which are garnered the treasures of the universe. If you have it not, whatever else you may have, you are poor and needy, and in prospect of eternity, *wretched indeed!* Make it your first object, then, to possess this faith. By all that is valuable in a holy life and a triumphant death, by all that is terrible in perdition and glorious in heaven, seek first a justifying faith in the cross of Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

ADOPTION.

THE next subject in the natural order, after justification, is *adoption*. The one prepares the way for the other. Adoption is an advance on justification. It brings us nearer to God. The one makes us accepted subjects of *law*, the other makes us *sons*. Justification, however important, is a cold, legal idea, compared with adoption. Those whom Christ has redeemed, he is not satisfied merely to acquit;—he also makes them *sons of God*. This will more fully appear, as we proceed to show the *nature* and *benefits* of adoption.

I. ITS NATURE. "The adoption of sons,"* implies, of course, that we are *not* the sons of God by nature. Men do not adopt their own natural children. We are declared to be, by nature, "children of the wicked one."† Neither, if we were by nature the children of God, should we need to be *born* again. How perfectly does the idea of adoption comport with

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* Gal. iv. 5. † Matt. xiii. 38.

that of regeneration. Regeneration effects the *spiritual change* required; adoption *owns* and *seals* the work. Regeneration renews, justification acquits, and adoption *welcomes* the renewed and justified soul as an heir of God.

History clearly developes the origin and meaning of adoption. It was a custom among the Jews, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, for childless parents of wealth to select favorite children from destitute families, take them to their own homes, place their affections upon them, educate them, treat them as their own children, make them such in law, and finally to bequeath to them their estates. This is adoption. It illustrates the *nature* of our adoption of God, although not the *reasons* for it. So far as the *necessities* of the adopted are concerned, our case is here represented; but in other respects the analogy fails. God was not without illustrious sons, that he needed to adopt any of earth's poor creatures. His heavens were filled with flaming spirits, and millions of brilliant stars stood burning around his throne. Nor were there any *attractions* in these children of the wicked one, that God was moved to think of adopting them. Mordecai adopted Esther, because she was exceeding fair; and Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses, because the tears and the smiles of the sweet boy won her heart. But there is nothing in us to win the heart of God, until regenerating grace begets his spiritual image in our souls.

The motives of God in adopting us are therefore purely *gracious*. This is the more obvious, as God

anticipates the adoption of Christians, and regards them prospectively as children, even while they are yet in bondage. "Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." That is—the prospective heir and the servant, while infants together in the same family, are as yet personally poor alike, and alike subject to their guardians. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." That is—the ceremonial rituals and the bondage of sin were upon them, although prospectively the children of God, until the appointed time for their deliverance and adoption by Jesus Christ. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."* Having thus become the sons of God by regeneration and adoption, the spirit of adoption was given them, and they were henceforth to feel and act as heirs to the royal inheritance.

Adoption, then, in the scriptural sense, is being graciously taken by God from the condition of aliens and heirs of perdition, into that of *beloved children.*

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* Gal. iv.

II. Its benefits. These may be included under two heads—the blessings of the filial *spirit*, and those of the filial *relation*.

1. The blessings of the filial *spirit*. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit* of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Christians receive, then, on being adopted, the same filial spirit which dwelt in the heart of their incarnate Saviour. They *feel* towards God, as Christ felt, in his filial relation to him. They have the same freedom of *access* to him. They can come boldly to the throne of his grace. They are not afraid to call him their Father, to claim the privilege of children, and to ask of him the things they need.

They have towards him the *confiding* feeling of children. They feel entire confidence in committing all their interests, for both worlds, into his hands. Like the boy in the tempest at sea, who reposed sweetly in his berth because his father was at the helm, so it is the privilege of Christians ever to feel perfectly safe under the protection of their heavenly Father. They can realize a Father's hand, and see a Father's care, in all the events of life. They have towards God the spirit of filial *love*. Their affections cling sweetly to him, as their Father in heaven. The filial Christian can truly say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee."†

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* Gal. iv. 6. † Ps. lxxiii. 25.

" Were I in heaven, without my God,
'T would be no joy to me;
And while this earth is my abode,
I long for none but thee."

The spiritually adopted have thus a sensible *delight* in God, and all duties to him become a pleasure.

They have the spirit of *filial submission.* They know who it is that appoints the rod, and feel assured that the heart of their heavenly Father cannot err. If it is sometimes in their heart to say, with Jesus Christ, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," they can also say, with him, " Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

They have the spirit of *filial gratitude.* In every gift, they see their heavenly Father's care. Every rain-drop, and every sun-beam, that causes the earth to yield her bounty, is to them a token of his paternal love. In the degree that their filial spirit is active, does the earth seem to put on a brighter green, the sun shines with a more golden lustre, and even the midnight star looks out upon them from its dark chamber with a sweeter eye. This filial spirit, that sees a father's hand in every thing, greatly augments their interest in *all the operations of nature.* Where the unregenerate see only the working of a *lifeless law,* they look *beyond,* and see the finger of the *living God.* The silvery stream, gliding with gentle murmurs down the landscape, and the boisterous cataract, plunging headlong with its deafening thunder; the placid waters of a summer's sea, and the terrific noise of angry billows, when the proud waves lift up their heads sky-

ward, and come rolling in strength from afar; the soft breezes of evening, that gently fan and refresh us, and the wild tornado, that stalks furiously through the land on its errand of destruction;—the calm sky, the gentle dew, the fertilizing rain, and the dark and portentous thunder-cloud, the forked lightnings, and the terrific roar of heaven's artillery; and finally, the rainbow of promise, bending its glorious arch downward from the skies, like a smile on the brow of frowns, and resting upon the earth, reminding us that the Father's covenant love still bends from heaven to earth and rests with man—these, and all the other operations of nature, are to those who feel the lively workings of the filial spirit the kind and majestic movements of their heavenly Father.

This same filial spirit enables them also to see the meaning and enjoy the moral beauties *of the Bible.* To those who approach the divine Word with any other spirit, clouds and thick darkness rest on its pages. It is only as we approach the Bible with the spirit of children—the humble, docile, teachable spirit—counting our own knowledge ignorance, and our own wisdom folly—feeling as babes who have every thing to learn—that the Bible opens to us its luminous pages, as an Epistle of paternal love from our heavenly Father. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and *hast revealed them unto babes:*—Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."* Hence

* Matt. xi. 25.

the spirit of adoption gives an assurance of the truth and inspiration of the Bible, which nothing else can impart. The man who has not this witness of the Spirit, has more or less of doubts. He may be convinced, intellectually, and often pronounce his doubts vanquished ; but they will return, and re-return upon him, and haunt him all the way down to the grave. It is only the filial spirit, that plants the two-edged sword in the *heart* of infidelity, and lays the cruel tyrant silent in death.

This same filial spirit teaches Christians the holy art of *prayer*. They go to God, feeling that they know not what to pray for, as they ought to pray ; but this spirit helpeth their infirmities, and maketh intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Finally, this spirit seals the Christian an heir of heaven. It tends to put from him servile fear, banish doubts, and yield the sweet assurance that God is indeed his portion, and heaven his eternal home. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."†

* Rom. viii. 26. † Gal. iv.

Thus does this filial spirit, by drawing the Christian near to God, and placing him beneath the kindlings of his smile, light up the darkness and alleviate the sufferings of life. It makes many a little spot, amid the most rough and frowning scenes, put on the bloom and fragrance of Eden. It repels the frosts of adversity, and strews living green amidst the most desolate regions of earth. It even causes "roses and myrtles" to bloom "unchilled on the verge of the avalanche."

No man can thus contemplate the spirit of adoption, without seeing it to be the richest boon of heaven to mortals. Without it, in vain do friends smile, and riches increase, and honors thicken;—the orphaned heart will sigh,—and often will the reluctant tongue be compelled to exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;—what profit hath a man of all the labor which he taketh under the sun." This blessed spirit of adoption teaches man what profit he *hath* of all his labor; it points him to his heavenly Father's name, written with the tears of a Father's love, on all he beholds, on all he suffers, on all he enjoys. It thus rebukes his disquietudes, assuages his griefs, consoles his afflictions, heightens his joys, and renders his existence an unspeakable present as well as prospective privilege.

This spirit of adoption is possessed in different degrees by different Christians;—by none, probably, in so high a degree as might be; and by all, in different degrees at different times. There are times when some are enabled to record, with the sainted Martyn, "After a long and blessed season in prayer, I felt the spirit of adoption drawing me very near to God, and

giving me a full assurance of his love. My fervent prayer was, that I might be more deeply and habitually convinced of his unchanging, everlasting love, and that my whole soul might be altogether in Christ. I scarcely knew how to express the desires of my heart. I wanted to be all in Christ, and to have Christ for my all in all;—to be encircled in his everlasting arms, and to be swallowed up altogether in his fulness. I wished for no created good, or for men to know my experience; but to be one with thee, and live for thee, O God, my Saviour and my Lord. O may it be my constant care, to live free from the spirit of bondage, at all times having access to the Father. This I feel should be the state of the Christian;—perfect reconciliation with God, and a perfect appropriation of him in all his endearing attributes, according to all that he has promised—it is this, that shall bear me safely through the storm."*

2. The blessings of the filial *relation*. We have spoken of the *absolute* benefits of adoption; we are now to speak of its *relative* benefits. These are, in the highest degree, honor, heirship, and security.

The filial relation confers infinite *honor*. On his adoption into the family of God, the Christian's name is enrolled with all the shining names of earth and of heaven. Abraham, the father of the faithful, with all who have walked in his lofty steps, and Gabriel, with his glorious retinue, bowing and singing before the throne—are not ashamed to see his name on the same

* Memoirs of Henry Martyn.

page with theirs. They own him as a brother;—they embrace him as a welcomed companion of their honor. His name is enrolled with heaven's nobility. Nor is this all;—for Christ himself accords the relation. He is now, like Christ, a son of God; is hereafter, like him, to see God as he is, and be with him perfected in glory. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God;—and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is."* No honor can excel this. To be taken by the hand of Christ, conducted into the presence chamber of Jehovah's glories, and there acknowledged a son and an heir, is the highest honor man can aspire to, or angel reach. Ye who have ambition for honor, here is something worthy of its pursuit. Here you may let loose all its fires. Let the flame kindle and burn on your brow, with intensest ardors, it cannot scathe or shame you. Seek the honor that cometh from God only, and the noble ambition of your heart shall be fully gratified.

The filial relation confers also an infinite *heirship*. The Scriptures instruct us that Christians are, by their adoption, made heirs of glory. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also *glorified* together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectations of the creature, waiteth for the manifes-

* 1 John iii. 2.

tation of the sons of God."* The Christian thus earnestly expects the time, when his sonship will be made manifest, by his being publicly acknowledged an heir of the divine glory.

Christ came to redeem us, "that we might receive the adoption of sons; wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an *heir* of God through Christ."† Heirship is thus declared to be one of the distinguishing privileges of adoption.

And to *what* are Christians made heirs by adoption? To all the riches of the universe! Here is their title deed, made out and signed by the hand of God, in letters of blood—"*All things are yours*, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, ALL ARE YOURS, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."‡ The Pauls and Apolloses—all the great and good men of the earth—all the events of life and of death, shall subserve their welfare here; and hereafter, the thrones and garlands and harps of heaven, the tree of paradise and river of life, all the redeemed and holy, yea, God himself, shall be their everlasting inheritance.

The filial relation confers also infinite *security*. This is the crowning privilege. None but the Christian has an inheritance absolutely secure. The infidel has not;—for, by his own confession, he knows neither his inheritance nor his security. The worldling has not;—for the grave of all his possessions is already dug;—but so sure as the Bible is true, the Christian *does*

* Rom. viii. 19. † Gal. iv. 5, 6. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

know that *his* inheritance is as secure as the oath of the eternal God can make it. His consolation is therefore strong; his hope as an anchor, sure and stedfast. Mark the language—"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by *an oath*, that by *two immutable things*, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail."*

With every form of variety do the Scriptures set forth the perfect security of those, who have become the adopted sons of God. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his *children* shall have a place of *refuge*."† "The name of the Lord is a *strong tower*;—the righteous runneth into it, and *is safe*."‡ Christians are securely housed in that ark, which is pledged to withstand every tempest, to outride every storm, and to land them safely on the everlasting hills. It was the prayer of Christ, that not one of them may perish; that all may be with him where he is, to behold his glory;‖—and what the prayer of Christ and the oath of God provide for, his omnipotence makes sure. The laws of nature are all his; the destinies of the universe are at his disposal; every particle of dust, every living thing, is in his hand; and he is pledged to make all things subserve his everlast-

* Heb. vi. 17, 18. † Prov. iv. 26. ‡ Ps. xviii. 20. ‖ John xvii. 24.

ing glory, in the highest welfare of his children. Disease may waste their bodies; death may reduce them to ashes; oblivion may sweep her dark fingers over their names, and blot them from the records of the world;—but what then?—those ashes shall again live; health and beauty shall return and bloom immortally upon them; and the recording angel shall write their names upon the sky, in letters of living light. The stupendous economy of this material system may falter in its course;—the earth may stagger and reel from her orbit; the sun may be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, the stars go out in a cloudless midnight, and all this beauteous creation sink back into the tomb of chaos;—the sons of God have lost nothing. Their God—their heaven—their all—remains.

We conclude the chapter with remarking,

1. *Let the world beware how it thinks lightly of God's sons.* They may be of humble birth; earth may not know them; and when they die no lettered marble may tell the place of their dust. But beneath the rags of that poor Lazarus, who lies at your gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs from your table, is a *son of God!* who is soon to put on the shining garments of heaven and take his place in Abraham's bosom. Beware how you treat him, for hereafter your destinies may be reversed.*

And that humble neighbor, who is content to toil and shine in obscurity, to whose prayers you owe a thousand blessings, but to whom you would scarcely

* Luke xvi. 23.

deign to give a cup of cold water, is soon to sit in glory at the right hand of Jesus, and drink of the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Forget not that when the last shall be first and the first last, *yours* may be the place of shame, without even a drop of water to cool your tongue.

An instructive fable has come down to us from Ariosto, of a certain charming daughter of the skies appearing for a time on earth under a very humble and repulsive form. Those who treated her kindly while in her lowly condition, on reascending to her native glory, she owned as sons:—She revealed herself to them in her beauteous celestial form, became their guardian angel, made them happy with her blessing, and rich with her wealth.

There is more of meaning in what Christ said, than the world is willing to see,—"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Why this almost universal disposition to overlook, and even despise, the sons of God? Why are they considered a dull, mopish, senseless race, cheated out of earth's pleasures with a vain and shadowy conceit of imagined honor and reward hereafter? Because, as the apostle says, it doth not yet appear *what they shall be.* The men of the world do not know what they are, or they would not dare to treat them thus. They are princes in disguise. They are heirs to boundless wealth, in apparent poverty. As having nothing, they

possess all things. The attractions of beauty, the charms of social refinement, the elegancies of dress, may or may not attend them,—neither the lofty elegance of the court, nor the easy polish of highly cultivated circles, may be theirs; but in them we behold the richest treasures of earth,—the sons of God—immortal souls washed in the blood of the Lamb. The world knows them not, because it knew not Christ. But "the manifestation of the sons of God" will soon be made. This world is too dark a place in which to see them as they are. Pearls and diamonds in the dark look no more beautiful than ordinary stones. As the same sunbeams reveal the brilliancy of the diamond and the dulness of the worthless lump by its side, so will the light of eternity shed a glorious lustre on the sons of God and disclose the shame of his foes.

2. *Christians should live in anticipation of an exceeding glory.* They should expect great things. They should remember that they are sons of God. And what will not such a Father do, for those whom he has with such love and expense adopted?

Does faith stagger at the thought of being made such glorious creatures as the Scriptures represent the sons of God to be in heaven? Then think of what God has already done. He who could make that living soul out of nothing, and especially he who could transform that fallen spirit into a son, in so short a time, what can he not accomplish during the ages of eternity? Truly it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but it is enough to know that we are sons of God; and that all an infinite Father can do for those whom

he has redeemed with his blood, he will do for us. The child of God is *already* so changed from what he was, that he hardly knows his former self. What then will he be, when he shall have exchanged this earthly clog for a body nimble as the light and glorious as the sun; and when, for successive ages, his views shall have been enlarging, his heart expanding, and his understanding brightening?

Christians are to be *glorified*:*—the glory of Christ is to be given them. They ought to live on earth, therefore, as those who expect to live and reign with Christ forever in heaven. They who are to be kings and priests with God should keep the world under their feet. They should soar like the eagle, and look at the sun. They should anticipate something worthy of God to bestow upon his children. Then God will not be ashamed to own them. It was because those illustrious saints, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did thus, that God was not ashamed to be called *their* God. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. They desire a better country, that is, an *heavenly*; wherefore God is *not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.*"†

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* Rom. viii. 30. † Heb. xi. 16.

With such an inheritance in prospect, Christians should keep themselves "unspotted from the world." They should be submissive under trials, patient in adversity, and receive the corrections of their heavenly Father with gratitude. They should set their affections on things above, make no calculations for a portion here, maintain a firm repose of soul in the divine promise, and wait with earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God. If the earth refuses to herald their names in the registers of her honored sons, it is enough for them to know, that they are recorded in the Book of Life; if accompanied by no splendid train of menials, that guardian angels minister to them; if, like Abraham and like Jesus himself, neither home nor honor owns them here, that they are hereafter to dwell in palaces not made with hands, and to wear diadems of glory that shall never fade.

3. *We have here an object for boundless wonder.* A love of the marvellous is an element of our nature. Like all our other faculties, it is greatly perverted by sin; but it is an essential principle of our original nature, and can never be annihilated. God implanted it within us, because he has a use for it. It pertains to angels, as well as to men. They, too, "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and *marvellous* are thy works, Lord God Almighty."* And the object which Christ sets forth, pre-eminently, for *our* marvel, is the very work at which angels marvel. "And he will show

* Rev. xv. 3.

him greater works than these," said Christ, "*that ye may marvel.*"* He had just raised the sick to health, and absolved them from sin. The greater work which he was to do, at which they were to marvel, was to perfect redemption, and set his redeemed as manifested sons of God in heaven. And hence the apostle says, "*Behold*"—wonder—marvel—"what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."† Here then is something worthy of our wonder—the thing above all others, for which our power of wondering was given us. You cannot wonder too much here. The dying Evarts began to see things as they are, when he exclaimed, "Wonderful—wonderful—wonderful!" How amazing the transformation!—From an earth-worm to an angel—from an heir of wrath to a child of God—from corruption and the grave, to a shining immortality! Should you see the stones of the street rising up and brightening into stars; should you see the very clod that covers the Christian's grave ascend and take its place in the firmament, and shine like the sun in his meridian splendor, the transformation would not be more wonderful.

But see to it, that your wonder does not give place to incredulity. Say not, this is too much to believe. Is any thing too hard for the Almighty? Is *this* too hard for him, who formed this earth, and kindled that sun, and lit up yon starry heavens? Is it too much to *expect* from him, who gave the Son of his own bosom

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* John v. 20. † 1 John iii. 6.

to die for you upon the cross, that he might make you, through him, his adopted sons? Hearken to this divine logic. "He that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* That he should bestow this glory upon you, is wonderful indeed; but it is not too much for him to do; and he *will do it, that ye* MAY MARVEL.

Nor is the time distant. You are standing right on the verge of these amazing realities. A few days, and the curtain will rise, and the wonderful scene open. O, the glorious discoveries that will flash on your vision, as you enter the eternal world! Then will you see, as in a moment, what it is to be sons of God. What no human eloquence can portray, what even the Bible itself is unable to set forth, the visions of eternity will soon reveal.

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* Rom. viii. 32.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERSEVERANCE.

Do Christians ever fall fatally from grace? This is a question between evangelical and Arminian theology, of no ordinary interest. The question is no less than this, Whether any of those whom God has elected, regenerated, adopted, and sealed heirs of glory, do actually drop from his hand and perish? We think not. We believe the Father's will, that of all which he hath given to Christ, he should lose nothing,* will be accomplished.

The doctrine now to be considered, is that of the *perseverance of the saints.* This doctrine is, that *once* a Christian *always* a Christian. Every individual who has been renewed, justified, adopted, *will through divine grace infallibly persevere unto eternal life.* I shall now proceed to prove this doctrine from the following sources.

1. THE ANTECEDENCE OF GRACE. The Christian did not move *first*, in the matter of his salvation. The

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* John vi. 39.

grace of God went *before* him. "We love God," said the apostle, "because he *first* loved us."* If the creature of himself first moved *to* God, he might of himself move *away* from God, in a sense to make his salvation entirely independent of any will but his own.

All admit that God does not leave Christians, unless they first leave him. But does he ever permit them fatally to *leave* him? The question is not, whether he will keep them, *if* they remain faithful, but whether he will continue to *keep* them faithful:—not what *he* will do, in consequence of *their* doing, but what *they* will do, in consequence of *his* doing. He *began* the work—his grace *goes before them*—and the same grace will go before forever. Despite of all their inward corruptions and outward temptations, he is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy. Hence the apostle says to the Christians of Philippi,—"Being confident of this very thing, that he which *hath begun* a good work in you *will perform it* until the day of Jesus Christ."†

From the fact that the grace of God took the lead in securing our salvation, even while we were yet enemies, the apostle deduces the most consoling assurance. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were *yet sinners* Christ died for us. *Much more* then, being now justified by his blood, we *shall be saved* from wrath through him. For if when we were *eneemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of his

* 1 John iv. 19. † Phil. i. 6.

Son, *much more, being reconciled,* we shall be saved by his life."* There was a time, when the wrath of God hung impending over us. But the decree of eternal love went forth, and,

> ——————"recalled
> The ministers of vengeance and pursuit,
> Back to the gates of heaven :—
> ——————and the thunder,
> Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
> ——hath spent its shafts, and ceases now
> To bellow."

The argument is briefly this,—God, not man, began the work. And if he began the work, when there was nothing in the creature to invite but every thing to repel him, will he now abandon the work, after the creature has become by grace an object of his complacent love? The apostle seems to think not.

2. Analogy. It was ever the way of God to *finish* what he begins. He began to build the world, and although uncounted ages rolled away from the laying of the foundation to the completion of the structure, his work went progressively onward to its consummation. Nothing could stop it. Under his steady counsel and determined hand, out of chaos and darkness, by slow and sure stages, emerged this finished and bright creation. Peradventure, to an angel's eye the work seemed very long and doubtful;—its consummation at times almost to be despaired of. But it came at last. At God's appointed time, the earth stood above the floods dressed in living green;—the

* Rom. v. 9, 10.

heavens hung out their golden lamps around it;—the well balanced wheels of time commenced their glorious circuits; paradise bloomed; the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, "*It is finished.*" All was completed, as it lay in the mind of Jehovah from eternity.

In all his subordinate works, we observe the same inflexible going forth from incipiency to completion. He entered upon the work of destroying the world by a deluge; of consuming Sodom and Gomorrah with a storm of fire; of humbling the haughtiness of Pharaoh and his host; of conducting the children of the covenant into Canaan, and driving out the idolatrous tribes; of scourging and scattering the nation that rejected him;—and in every instance, he *finished* his work. "When I *begin*," he declared by his prophet, "I will also *make an end.*"* He began to construct an adamantine prison for the devil and his angels; nor did he desist from the work, till the last bolt was driven and made fast forever. He began to prepare mansions for the righteous, nor will his hand cease to multiply and adorn them, till their pearly gates shall enclose all the purposed glories of his everlasting love.

Show me an instance, in all the records of ages, wherein God began a work and left it unfinished. Not one can you find. I argue then, from analogy, that in every instance where he has begun a work of grace in the soul, he will carry it on to completion.

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* 1 Sam. iii. 12.

3. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF REDEMPTION. In the mysterious depths of past eternal ages a covenant was made, in which an inheritance was ensured to Christ, as the reward of his anticipated sacrifice. Christ was not to bleed in vain, nor upon any uncertainty. His coming into our world was no doubtful experiment, no fortuitous adventure. A seed was given to Christ, "before the foundation of the world,"* to be his eternal inheritance. "My Father which *gave* them me," said he, "is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."† And St. Paul says, "According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie *promised before the world began.*"‡ This promise could not have been made to men; for men did not then exist. Jesus Christ existed with the Father from eternity, and with him was this covenant formed. Again the apostle says, "He hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, *which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*"‖ And as to his keeping them unto eternal life, though often compelled to chastise their sins, he declared, "if his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with stripes, nevertheless *my loving kindness will I not utterly take from*

* Eph. i. 4. † John x. 29. ‡ Titus i. 2. ‖ 2 Tim. xi. 9.

*him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."** And to the same intent does Christ say, "This is the Father's will, which hath sent me, *that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing*."† And again he says, "This is the will of him that sent me, that *every one* which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting life;* and *I will raise him up at the last day*."‡ So sure, then, as there can be no breach of covenant in the Godhead, *all* whom the Father has given to Christ, are made sure to him forever;—and this, as he says, includes every believer.

4. THE NATURE OF THE BELIEVER'S UNION WITH CHRIST. Language cannot denote a more sacred and indissoluble union than that which connects Christ with his regenerate people. They are the spouse, of which he is the husband;‖ the members of the body, of which he is the head;§ the branches, of which he is the vine;¶—they are even parts of his vital flesh and bones.** And will he suffer such a union as this to be destroyed? Will he be divorced from the chosen of his heart? Will he allow the members of his own body to be torn off? Will he separate his own flesh and bones? The false spouse, the spurious member, the lifeless branch, belongs not to him, and shall be cast away; but *never* the *true*. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." As Christ lives, and lives entire, the believer *must* live also.

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* Ps. lxxxix. 30—33. † John vi. 39. ‡ John v. 24.
‖ Rom. vii. 4; Isa. liv. 5. § 1 Cor. xi. 3. ¶ John v. 15. ** Eph. v. 30.

5. THE PRAYER OF CHRIST. This is a prayer that *always prevails*. Christ himself said, "I knew that thou hearest me *always*."* Mark now how he has prayed for his believers. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give *eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me. Holy Father, *keep* through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. Sanctify them, through thy truth."† And lest some of his future followers should be left to the gloomy supposition that they were not interested in his prayer, he adds, "Neither pray I for *these alone*, but for *those also* which *shall* believe on me through their word, that they *all* may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be *one in us*. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, *that they may be one even as we are one;* I in them, and thou in me, that they may be *made perfect* in one, and that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."‡ Again he says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, *that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me*." There is thus an ever-availing prayer lodged in heaven's high court for all Christians, that they may be kept from falling, perfected in holiness, dwell forever with Christ in heaven, and behold his glory. Can there then be a failure?

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* John xi. 42. † John xvii. 2. ‡ John xvii. 20—24.

6. THE DIVINE EXPENDITURE UPON THIS WORK. The treasures which God has already lavished upon the souls of believers, are a pledge that he will not abandon the undertaking. Suppose you were to see a man expending a large fortune upon the erection of a magnificent house; but before it is completed so as to be inhabitable, the work suddenly stops;—and there the desolate walls remain from year to year, marred and wasted by time, shattered by wintry blasts, proclaiming mournfully to every passer-by, that either the wisdom or the resources of the builder were wanting. In either case, the fortune is wasted; and the builder is remembered only to be pitied or derided.

Think now of the treasures which God has expended upon the work of redemption;—the tears and blood of his own Son. Consider how long he has been engaged in this work, and what agencies he has employed. Not to go on and perfect it, would be to throw away all this expense, to make the sacrifice of Christ of no avail;—to cause the cross—the central glory of the universe—to stand only as an everlasting monument of failure! As the dreadful ages of eternity roll along, and its awful storms sigh around the mourning cross, what do they utter to the ears of despairing angels? Hear, ye soaring spirits, and be confounded. Your God, in whom you have garnered up all your hopes, began a mighty work, expended his choicest treasures upon it, and then abandoned it! Let every harp be hung upon the willows; let every song be changed to a sigh; let every bright robe give place to sackcloth and ashes; let the stars of heaven be

quenched; let shouts of triumph be exchanged for wailings of despair! Who can tell how soon the pillars of heaven may be left to fall. And even if a *single* soul that has been washed in atoning blood, and given in covenant to Christ, should be plucked from the Father's hand, there would be cause of everlasting distrust and sadness in heaven, and hell's heavy note of monotonous despair would be relieved with a horrid yell of malicious gladness.

7. THE PROMISE AND OATH OF GOD. So soon as a sinner repents and exercises justifying faith in Christ, the great God is in covenant with him, and is engaged, by bonds and oath, to see his salvation made sure. "Wherein God," says the inspired writer, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of salvation the immutability of his counsel, *confirmed it by an oath*, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we might have strong consolation* who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail."* "If we believe not"—that is, although it seem too good to believe, and we are therefore sometimes left to doubt—"yet he abideth faithful, *he cannot deny himself.*"† Again God says of believers, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, and they shall be my people *forever*. And I will make an *everlasting* covenant with them, that I

* Heb. vi. 17, 18. † 2 Tim. ii. 13.

will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, *that they shall not depart from me.*"* Hence the apostle could triumphantly say, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."† The true Christian, just in the degree of his evidence that he is such, can therefore take up the consoling assurance,—"We are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."‡

These are briefly our reasons for holding the gracious doctrine of the saints' perseverance; and until we can see better reasons than these for renouncing it, let us continue to hold it, as an anchor to our souls, sure and stedfast.

But there are two or three plausible objections, which justice to the subject requires us to notice.

1. *The Bible has warnings against falling.* True, and these very warnings are among the means of keeping Christians from falling. Now you must not make the means which God employs to accomplish his purpose, serve you as proof that he will *not* accomplish his purpose. Such logic as this will not do. With all true Christians, these warnings are *effectual;* for it

* Jer. xxxii. 40. † Rom. viii. 30. ‡ Rom. viii. 37, 38.

is in their hearts to believe and obey God. So St. Paul warned the sailors against leaving the ship, telling them that their salvation depended on their remaining in it. "Except these abide in the ship," he said, "ye cannot be saved."* And this he said, *after* he had assured them, by a revelation from heaven, that not one of them would be lost. The one was as true as the other. If it was certain that not one of them would be lost, it was equally certain that they would heed the warning and abide in the ship. And just so, if it is certain that Christians will be kept unto salvation, it is equally certain that they will heed the warnings against falling, and abide in Christ.

2. It is said the Scriptures teach us, *that Christians sometimes actually do fall fatally from grace.* This we boldly deny. We are referred to the celebrated passage in Heb. vi. 4:—"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, *if* they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." Now if this passage proves that any Christians actually *do* fall to perdition, it proves too much for the Arminian theory of fall and recovery. That theory which we oppose advocates falling again and again, and of being again and again restored. But this Scripture precludes *all* restoration. The passage, however, is plainly hypothetical, intended for warning and encouragement

* Acts xxvii.

only. So far from teaching that true Christians actually *do* fall, the apostle is careful to add immediately, "But beloved, we are persuaded *better* things of you, and things which ACCOMPANY SALVATION, though we thus speak."

The other favorite passage of the advocates of falling from grace, is in Peter ii. 20:—"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb. The dog is returned unto his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." A most unfortunate passage for them, after all. Christians are never in the Scriptures compared to swine and dogs. They are the "*lambs*"* of Christ; while those unclean animals represent the ungodly.† The swine and the dog, although they are sometimes for a while improved in their habits and appearance, yet, retaining their old nature, and subsequently returning to their customary practices, forcibly represent the case of those who are for a time apparently renewed, but who, not really changed in heart, after a season return to their former ways. Were the dog and the swine changed into lambs, they would

* Luke x. 3. † Rev. xxii. 15.

never return, the one to his vomit and the other to his wallowing again in the mire. The case of all who fall, therefore, is a case of falling from only *apparent*, not *real*, grace.

3. It is said that the doctrine of the saints' perseverance *weakens the motives for holy living*. Having proved the doctrine true from the Scriptures, we are under no obligation to meet this objection. But we will meet it, by setting off one assertion against another. We assert, then, that it can produce this effect only in the case of hypocrites and self-deceivers. It may hasten the exposure of such, but as to real Christians, it renders them the more stedfast and devoted. It makes them realize what a great, solemn, glorious event it is, to be regenerate heirs of God ;—it conducts them away from all that is false and capricious in self-dependence, to the *rock of ages*. It makes them think less of themselves, and more of God. Hence faith, love, humility, gratitude, joy, hope, assurance, are all natural fruits of this doctrine. It operates as a charm of seven fold chords, to bind the believer's heart to his Saviour. Under its legitimate influence, he is no longer the victim of a pale and sickly caprice, but has a robust and manly constitution. He is stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; *forasmuch as he knows that his labor is not in vain in the Lord."**

Here then, ye heirs of grace, is the source of your strength and joy. Here is your well of salvation,

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

whence the waters of life eternally flow. Looking to Jesus, you are surely conquerors. It was for you, that the Godhead took on him the humiliations and sorrows of humanity; for you he sweat and agonized in the garden; for you his back was furrowed with the cruel lash, and his soul crushed with sins more cruel stroke; for you he hung in ignominy and torture on the cross: *and will he after all abandon you?* Will he trifle with his own tears and blood? Impossible!

> "Grace *will complete* what grace begins,
> To save from sorrow and from sins;
> The work that wisdom undertakes,
> Eternal mercy *ne'er forsakes.*"

Discouragements may sometimes thicken on your path,—you may seem too feeble to grapple with them; but remembering the Father's will, that of all which he hath given to Christ he shall lose nothing, arms the feeblest spirit with omnipotence. "Have you not heard, have you not known, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth *fainteth not, neither is weary?* He giveth *power to the faint,* and to them that *have no might, he increaseth strength.* Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall *renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.*"* Chris-

* Isa. xl. 30, 31.

tians are to trust in God at *all* times—times of darkness, as well as light. We have heard of a certain people that chose to worship the sun, because he was a day-god. Supposing the sun quenched in the sea at night, they imagined their confidence and duties towards him then suspended, till another morning rose. Not so the Christian ;—he is to trust his God *in the dark*, as well as in the light. He is to be as confiding, as stedfast, as devout, in the gloomy depths of midnight, as in the splendors of high noon.

Ye who have become sons of God by faith in Christ, what a privilege is yours ! Children of an almighty and unchanging Father, before the world's foundations, you were his in purpose, you are now his in grace, and you are soon to be his in glory. As God liveth, it *must* be so. Your salvation does not depend upon yourselves. The mighty responsibility rests on no human will ;—no not on an angel's wing. It has been surrendered by faith to an omnipotent Redeemer. As his arm is all-powerful, so is his grace inexhaustible. The rivers may cease to flow ; the waters of the ocean may dry up ;—but the streams of Jehovah's covenanted love to his redeemed, will never cease ; the abundance of his grace in Jesus Christ, can never fail. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word *shall not pass away*.

Courage, then. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. A few more conflicts, and all will be over. Your feet will stand on mount Zion, and the song of victory will be upon your lips. A

few more hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, a few more tears, and the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

INTERMEDIATE STATE.

Discoursing upon the end of life, the wise preacher said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* Two solemn facts are here announced—the return of our mortal bodies to their kindred earth, and of our immortal spirits to God. The former is that great debt, which all who live must pay. The strong men must bow themselves, and all the daughters of music must be brought low. The silver chord of life, which held together, as in wedlock-bands, the spirit and the body, must be loosed; the golden bowl, filled with earth's choicest dainties, must be broken,—the pitcher at the fountain, about to bear a refreshing draught to the parched lips, shall be suddenly dashed; the light of the eyes shall be quenched, desires shall fail, and the icy hand of death embrace the quivering frame. Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. But is this all? The Scrip-

* Eccl. xii. 7.

tures assure us not. While the dust returns to the earth, the spirit returns to God to give up its account.

We are now to speak of the INTERMEDIATE STATE between death and the resurrection.

An opinion has extensively obtained, that between death and the resurrection the soul has no conscious existence. Are we then to believe, as we look upon the solemn and placid face of the corpse, after the death-struggle is over, that the intelligent spirit, which a moment before communed with us, has ceased to act, or is locked up in that frozen form, to descend with it to the grave?

The advocates of this opinion are divided between two theories;—the one, that the soul is a vapory, aerial, or fluid substance, pertaining to the body, and dependent on its physical organization. This is the theory of materialism. The other theory is, that the soul is a separate existence from the body, but falls asleep at death, to wake not till the resurrection. They amount to the same thing—the annihilation of *conscious existence.*

This opinion has obtained extensive currency. It was maintained by the celebrated Dr. Priestly, the champion of liberal Christianity, and is still advocated by his followers of various names and sects. Others have no settled opinion on the subject;—and others still, who are convinced of the truth in their own minds, think that our condition between death and the resurrection is so trifling an affair, compared with eternity, as to be hardly worth contending for. Hence

it is that ministers have so seldom preached on this subject.

Grant that the period between death and the resurrection will seem as nothing to the righteous, when they awake from their oblivious sleep;—it is on the *living*, not the dead, that God's revelation was designed to act. And what living man can persuade himself, that it is of little consequence whether Noah, Abraham, Lot, and Moses, have been for three or four thousand years in the glories of heaven, or in a state of annihilation? And all our friends who have died in the Lord, together with the millions of millions of his people who have finished their course on earth, can it be a matter of indifference with us whether they are now in a state of annihilation, or are glorifying and enjoying God in that brighter world? And with whom can it be a matter of small moment, whether he is himself to be, in a few days, in the world of retributions, or as though he had never been? What dying Christian can have the stoicism to consider it all one, whether he is going directly to see his Redeemer, and live with him, or to be petrified for unknown ages in the marble slumbers of the grave? On the dying vision of Stephen a dawn of the heavenly glory beamed: and is it of little importance whether the curtain of death intercepted it, and laid an oblivious night of ages on his soul, or whether his blest eyes are now drinking in the light of heaven and his spirit ranging its happy fields?

We wish to know, when death shall come to stare us in the face, and lay on us his icy fingers, what he

is commissioned to *do* with us ;—whether to hand us over to the warm embrace of our Saviour, and the sweet fellowship of angel-spirits, or consign our panting spirits for unknown ages to the horrible gloom of annihilation.

Let us see then what light the Scriptures shed on this subject.

The position which I am to demonstrate is this—*That between death and the resurrection the souls of men, disembodied, are in a state of living, active, conscious existence, enjoying or enduring the retributions of eternity.*

All but atheists admit that there is a God, who is himself a pure Spirit. He is independent of all material organization. He created celestial spirits, like himself, which the Scriptures call angels. Not that angel-spirits are, like God, independent. They live not by underived strength, they shine not with unborrowed lustre. In this respect, God, the infinite Spirit, is unlike all created spirits. While he receives aid from none, all the worlds of matter and of mind hang on his omnipotent will ;—while all created lights are too feeble to reach him, he throws, like the sun, the beams of his throne over the universe.

But that he has peopled the heavenly worlds with a race of spirits, like himself in respect to independency of material organizations, is a plain matter of revelation. Evidently he could then, if he chose, create another order of spirits, and place them in connection with material bodies. This is what we believe he *has* done. Man considered as an animal, and man consid-

ered as a rational soul, is of two natures,—the one he holds in common with the brute creation, the other, with the angelic tribes. Although they are here, for purposes of probation, placed in connection, yet the existence of the one does not depend upon that of the other. It is certain that God can create a living body, and endow it with all the properties of intelligent animal life, without placing it in connection with an immortal soul. This he has done in the case of the *brute* creation. It is equally certain that he can create an immortal spirit, and endow it with all the properties of intelligent spiritual life, without placing it in connection with a mortal body. This he has done in the case of the *angelic* creation. Now man upon earth is a *complex* being, partaking of both the mortality of the animal, and the immortality of the angel.

Animal life can exist only under some organized form; but *spiritual* life can exist in the highest degree of intensity, as in God, independently of all material forms. On awaking from profound sleep, or a state of suspended animation, the soul often makes no report of the interval, because its communication with the present organized mode of existence has been intercepted;—at other times, however, this communication is allowed to go on, and then the soul brings back the most thrilling reports of its visions of bliss or of wo. Indeed the highest activities of the soul ever known, have been in the feeblest states of the body, and even when the body was apparently dead. The brightest light ever poured on the mental eye, the richest melodies that ever charmed the ear, have been enjoyed

when all the physical organs were closed as fast as if death had put his iron chain upon them. These facts prove, beyond controversy, that the soul does *not* need this bodily eye, in order to see, nor this bodily ear, in order to hear, nor any of these bodily faculties, in order to put forth its lofty activities. It can indeed use this body, but it is a coarse and clumsy machine for so subtle and mighty an agent—rather a clog than a help —and is undoubtedly intended for its trial and discipline. They demonstrate that there is nothing absurd, or even improbable, in the doctrine of the active, conscious existence of the soul between death and the resurrection.

The question is however to be settled only by revelation, and to that source we now appeal. You will observe that the precise point to be proved is this, that those who have died from the earth are *not* in a state of annihilation till after the resurrection, but are *now* living and acting intelligencies. "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them;—and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them *Moses and Elias talking with him.* Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."* Moses had been dead some fifteen hundred years. Had his soul been in a state of annihilation,

* Matt. xvii. 1—4.

how could he have presented himself on this mount of transfiguration. He was not *translated*, like Elijah, but the sacred historian informs us that his body was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor. He must then have existed as a *living spirit*;—and he was allowed in this instance, as angel-spirits often were, to assume a visible form, like Elijah, for the purpose of presenting himself to human eyes. There is no escaping from this inference, but in the supposition that either Moses had been actually raised from the dead—of which we have no hint,—or that the account is a mere fiction, intended for embellishment and effect—which no honest believer can admit. Moses, therefore, as truly as Elijah, although his mortal dust sleeps in the valley of Moab, is still a living and acting being.

The penitent thief on the cross "said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*"* On that day, before the sun went down, they both expired on the cross; but Christ was not raised from the dead till the third day after. The bodies of the Saviour and of the saved went to the tomb, but their spirits met, *on that day*, in paradise. Now paradise does *not* mean the torpor of death, or annihilation. Paradise was the word among the Jews to signify a state of *happiness*, and *glory*. It is the synonyme for heaven. The soul of the penitent thief did not then sleep with the body, but went directly from the cross into a state of conscious bliss.

* Luke xlii. 43.

"And fear not them," said Christ, "which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Here Christ teaches that the body may be killed, without killing the soul. Men may terminate the *animal* life, but they cannot extinguish the *life of the spirit.* This proves that there is a life in man superior to that of the body, and over which natural death has no power.

The account of the rich man in hell, and of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom proves the same. The rich man was not translated, for we are informed that he "*died and was buried.*" Neither was Lazarus, for he also died, and was "*carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.*"† History informs us, that it was a common saying of the Jews, when a good man was about to die, "To-day shall he sit in the bosom of Abraham."‡ The phrase, "Abraham's bosom," was used by them to denote heaven, or the state of bliss. Here then we are informed of a soul in heaven, and of a soul in hell, while their bodies were in the grave, and their relatives were yet living in this world. Now it does not alter the case to say this is a parable, for a just parable is the antitype of facts and is always intended to illustrate *truth;* and the very point of truth here illustrated, is, that were a ghost from the eternal world to assume the body and appear to men on earth, he would not persuade those who will not believe on evidence already furnished. It is impossible to deny this proof

* Matt. x. 28. † Luke xvi. 19—31. ‡ Du Pin.

of the activity of the soul in the intermediate state, without rejecting the testimony of Christ altogether.

"I knew a man in Christ," says St. Paul, "above fourteen years ago—whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth—such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man—whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth—how that he was caught up to paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* He is here relating a remarkable vision, which he had of the eternal world. And so entirely independent of the body does he make the soul, that he says he cannot tell whether, when he had the vision, he was *in* the body or *out* of it. Showing, clearly, that the spirit may have glorious views of heavenly things when out of the body; and moreover, that in the apostle's opinion, its views may be more glorious when out of the body than when in it;—for it was the extraordinary character of his vision, that made him suppose his spirit might have been for a time emancipated from the body.

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord*."† Here we are clearly taught, that there is a mode of existence separate from the body, in which the conscious soul is in the enjoyment of its Saviour. None can doubt, that to be absent from the

* 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. † 2 Cor. v. 8.

body means *death;* and that to be present with the Lord does *not* mean either torpor or annihilation, but a delightful sense of the divine presence and glory.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a straight betwixt the two, *having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*"* Could it possibly be gain to die, if death were to his conscious spirit a state of annihilation? Is departing to be with Christ, synonymous with passing into a state of oblivion? Then we may as well all turn atheists. Paul desired to depart and be with Christ, because he considered that a greater privilege, so far as himself was concerned, than the service of Christ here. Although his communion with Christ on earth gave him great joy, his communion with him on leaving the body would afford greater. The passage admits of no other construction.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal," says St. John, "I saw under the altar *the souls of them that were slain* for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"† Here the apostle has a vision of the eternal world, and he beholds the souls of martyrs, while yet the wicked were prospering in the earth, holding communion with God.

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* Phil. i. 21—24. † Rev. vi. 9, 10.

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the *spirits of just men made perfect*, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."* Here the apostle instructs us, that by becoming Christians we become allied to the city of God, the new Jerusalem—heaven—in which are God, and Christ, and angels, and the *spirits of just men made perfect*. Now these perfected spirits of justified men could not be Christians living on the earth, for it was these that the apostle was addressing. And their being made perfect cannot mean that they are in a state of unconscious sleep or annihilation; if so, we must all look, as the end of our race, for the slumbers of an everlasting night. The only solution is, that the spirits of justified men, when they die, pass directly into a perfected state in heaven, to commune with God, and Christ, and holy angels.

The doctrine of the resurrection was not distinctly taught, until the Christian advent, yet patriarchs, saints, prophets, of the Old Testament, lived and died in full assurance of immortal life and bliss beyond the grave. "These all died *in faith*, not having seen the promises but embracing them, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."† And down to the time of Christ, all the Jews, save the single infidel sect of Sadducees, firmly believed in the conscious and active existence of the soul immediately after death.

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* Heb. xii. 22, 23. † Heb. xi.

This notion of an intermediate sleep, or annihilation, is a figment of comparatively modern infidelity.

The language commonly used by the ancients to denote death, is very expressive of their views. It is *giving up the ghost, or spirit.* It denotes the return of the body to the earth, and the giving up of the spirit for retribution. Accordingly when the righteous died, they were said to be gathered to their people. This was said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others. Some have supposed that being gathered with their people means being *buried* with them;—but this cannot be, for all the people of Abraham were buried in Padan Aram, or in Ur of the Chaldees; while *he* was buried in the cave of Macpelah, in Canaan. Neither was Isaac buried with his people. Their people with whom they were gathered at death, to be the companions of their joy, were not corruption and worms, but the general assembly and church of the first born, *the spirits of just men made perfect.*

That Job had a glimpse of the resurrection, in his extraordinary vision of the future, does not prove that the resurrection was then commonly apprehended, for his views were far above the level of the dispensation then enjoyed.

It appears then, that unless the faith of all the ancient saints was a vain faith, and unless the ruthless hand of a licentious criticism, or the vagaries of a loose interpretation, be allowed to destroy some of the plainest teachings of the Bible. We *must* admit that the souls of men do at death enter directly into a state of conscious retributions.

The soul is then an essence entirely distinct from the body. It is not a mere chain of exercises;—it is a positive *existence*—a *reality*—as truly as matter. Thought, love, fear, hope, veneration, and all the operations of an intellectual and moral nature, must have their basis in something real. If from nothing only nothing comes, the greatest of effects can come only from the greatest of causes. And what are the effects of matter, compared with those of the intelligent spirit—that spirit before which the savage wilderness melts away and becomes a blooming paradise; which constructs a high path for ships over the trackless sea; which compels all the laws of nature into its service, and even snatches the flashing lightnings from their clouds; which can dart in an instant over spaces which it would require ages for light to traverse; and finally, which can with a single leap pass "the flaming bounds of time and space," and burn with seraphic joys before the throne of God!

We do not know but the spirit of Paul was permitted to leave the body for a season, when he was caught up into heaven, and heard those words which it is not lawful for a man to utter; and we know not how much truth is to be attached to the claims of mesmerism—that the spirit may be charmed away from the body, and sent on errands of wonderful discovery;—but we believe it to be a general law of our present condition, that the soul and the body—the immortal and the mortal—shall be separated only by death. We cannot always accompany the spirit through that mysterious and dark valley; which to the Christian, however, is

usually far from dark. Sometimes the diseased body afflicts the spirit with a dethronement of reason, wildness of fancy, or utter obliviousness, and always with more or less of its own earthliness, until the final, decisive moment comes, when death executes his commission, strikes the blow, and opens the prison-door. At that instant the emancipated spirit goes forth, a free denizen of eternity. It then enters upon the higher walks of existence. Like a bird let loose, it moves with unfettered wing in its own proper element. Its faculties are quickened into a more vigorous and commanding activity; its perceptions become immeasurably more lucid and comprehensive, than while they were restricted in these dull fetters of clay. The Scriptures instruct us that a private judgment is passed upon every individual, on leaving the body. He is found to be in a justified, or an unjustified state—in harmony with the laws of the moral universe and the grace of redemption, or otherwise—a lover of God and holiness, or the opposite,—and according as he is the one, or the other, he is approved or condemned. In the one case, he has within him the elements of everlasting bliss; in the other, those which must embitter his immortality. In the one case, therefore, he sees the King in beauty—beholds Christ as he is, and thus beholding him is perfectly transformed into his moral likeness. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall *see him as he is.*"* In the other case, he sees no beauty in heaven's king, appal-

* 1 John iii. 2.

ing frowns sit as a cloud on the face of his Judge, and by the withering and desolating sentence of exclusion he is, like a star struck from its sphere, lost to all the sweet and glorious attractions of heaven, and doomed to the blackness of darkness forever.

The former enters, therefore, immediately upon a state of unalloyed bliss, the latter upon a state of corresponding wo. The former begins to drink full draughts of the river of life; the latter to feel the burning thirst of ungratified desires, remorseful conscience, and frowning justice.

Whether there are *localities* for the righteous and the wicked, on leaving the body, I shall not here stop to inquire; but would simply say, it is unnatural to suppose that the wicked are allowed to dwell with the righteous, and that it seems most reasonable to suppose that they are at once consigned to the place prepared for them. Our Saviour said he was going to prepare mansions for his people, and it is not to be presumed that he will *exclude* them from those mansions till after the resurrection. We believe that Noah, and Abraham, and Paul, are already there. It may sometimes be the privilege of the departed Christian, for aught we know, to linger about the scenes of earth; but there is a higher privilege, from which we cannot think him excluded—to open his eyes on the splendors of those celestial mansions, and gaze on the ineffable glories of Christ.

These considerations bring eternal retributions *very near*. It is but a breath, a vapor, that separates us from them. They also invest death with an amazing

solemnity. It is not "the pains, the groans, the dying strife;" not the parting with all the possessions and friendships of earth; not the narrow house of gloom and corruption, awaiting the body, that imparts the shrinking dread to death;—it is the fact that the undying spirit is about to open its eye on the tremendous scenes of eternity. That active, conscious, immortal spirit, is about to meet its Judge, and render its last account! The curtain that has hitherto hung before the eye of the probationer is about to rise, and all that is glorious in an eternity saved, or awful in an eternity lost, is about to burst on his vision. A few hours or moments, and his eternal destiny will be fixed in heaven or in hell! The hour, the moment, at length comes! There is an awful pause. The last struggle of nature is over;—the gates of mortality are thrown open;—the struggling spirit has escaped. And as we gaze upon the calm, pale form, now only a form, that deathless spirit is awaking to more amazing realities and more mighty activities than we have ever conceived. Is it a spirit of sin? He that is filthy is filthy still. No welcome voice of love from heaven falls on his ear;—he cannot soar and sing with angels;—he cannot see that glorious face which illumines the heavenly worlds,—for only the pure in heart can see God;—no sweet remembrances of the past, or anticipations of the future cheer him, and he sinks into the unutterable woes of an undone eternity.

Is he a spirit of holiness? He that is holy is holy still. His pure and piercing eye descries the far-rolling worlds of brightness, all radiant with the glory of God and the Lamb. An innumerable company of

angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, invite him with their hallelujahs to come up higher. With bounding joy, he exclaims,

> " I mount, I fly :—
> O death, where is thy victory ?
> O grave, where is thy sting ?"

In a moment the gates of glory receive him ;—and while our tears are falling, he is in the midst of the visions of that world, where God wipes all tears away ;—while our mournful silence is broken only with sobs of grief, his ears are drinking the melodies of heaven, and he is beginning to sing that new song which no man on earth can learn. He has reached his home—and so shall he be " forever with the Lord."

CHAPTER XV.

RESURRECTION.

At the famous pool of Bethesda lay a great multitude of the victims of disease—the blind, the halt, the withered—awaiting the angelic blessing of the waters. Among these was one who had been bowed under infirmity thirty-eight years. His case touched the compassion of Jesus, and, at the bidding of that almighty power which will eventually quicken all the dead, the bands of disease fell off, the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked. The gazing multitude marvelled. But Jesus said, "Marvel not at *this*, for the hour is coming in which *all that are in the graves* shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."* As much as to say, 'This is unworthy of a marvel, compared with what I shall do hereafter. For with the same power which has raised this sick man to health, I shall hereafter raise all the dead.'

The resurrection of the dead is emphatically a doctrine of the New Testament. Faintly indeed was it

* John v. 28.

shadowed forth in the Old. It was not till Christ himself had in his own person robbed the tomb of its prey, and become the first fruits of the slumbering myriads, that this glorious doctrine took firm possession of the apostolic mind. Then it was that that mind was so mightily electrified. A stream of light came upon it all at once from the chambers of hitherto impenetrable darkness;—a new world opened. Death was to the apostles no longer death;—the gates of the grave became the portals to a state of perfected and everlasting life.

To this doctrine philosophy has urged her strong objections. She tells us that the bodies of the dead have passed through endless transformations;—their fluids, now exhaling in vapors or descending in raindrops, now becoming alternately the juice of vegetables, or the sap of the forest trees;—their solids, passing at one time into the bones of other animals, at another into the stones or timber or furniture of our dwellings, at another into the lightest dust, and flying in every direction on the wings of the wind. At length, all comes round again, both fluid and solid, into some other form of organized life.

> "Where is the dust that has not been alive?
> The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors;
> From human mould we reap our daily bread.
> The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes,
> And is the ceiling of her sleeping sons."

The Pharaohs of Egypt sought to perpetuate their dust in a rocky immortality, but they could not. Even those massive and stupendous pyramids were too feeble

to hold the monarchs' ashes, that they should not frustrate the designs of selfishness and go forth in generous servitude, to do for ages coming what they had done for ages past.

But let two things be distinctly remembered;—first, no matter is annihilated. Every particle that shall compose our bodies when entombed, will be in existence on the resurrection morning, and the eye of Omniscience will know where to find it. Secondly, the same power which could mould this matter into so many earthly shapes, and make it subservient to so many earthly purposes, can transform it into celestial bodies, and thus make it subservient to the purposes of immortal spirits.

The doctrine of the resurrection is this,—*That at the end of the world the almighty power of Christ will transform the dust of all the dead into immortal bodies.* These bodies will be *spiritualized;* not strictly immaterial, for then they would not be bodies. They will be made "*like unto*" spirit as distinguished from the grossness, clumsiness, sensuality, and decay of these earthly bodies. The bodies of the saints will be like that of Christ, of ineffable beauty and transcendent glory.

And now for the *proof* of this doctrine. As it has been so confidently urged that science is against it, I shall consider it, first, in the light of science, and then in the light of Scripture.

The argument from science would be needless, but for the fact that the utter incompatibility of the doctrine of a literal resurrection with natural philosophy

has been so strenuously maintained, as to force a figurative or secondary meaning on those scriptures which teach the doctrine. I shall therefore first show that sound science proves nothing against the doctrine, but that, so far as she utters at all, she declares in its favor; and, secondly, that those scriptures which are supposed to teach the literal resurrection of the body, are of such a nature as to admit of no other meaning.

I. THE ARGUMENT FROM SCIENCE. There is a law of mind, which makes us prone to believe that things *will* be as they *have* been. We make our past experience of nature a prophecy of the future. Whatever we have known of nature's course, in bye-gone days and years, we expect will recur again in days and years to come. Why do we in the spring expect summer, with its burning suns; succeeding autumn, with its golden harvests; the following winter, with its frosts and snows; and spring again, to reanimate creation? Because we have known this course of things in *time past.* Our faith is here founded on the supposed *constancy of nature.* Nor is it until the mind is enlarged with general science, that it easily believes events falling without its own experience. The untaught prince of the burning zone would not believe that water is ever in a solid state. Why? Because he was ignorant of the laws of nature, and had never lived in a northern latitude. Now there are three ways of removing his scepticism:—Teach him the science of chemistry, and he will see that water may be congealed; transfer him to a northern latitude, and

let him witness it; or, let a company of veracious witnesses testify to the fact.

All these evidences have we of the resurrection of the dead. Science demonstrates the possibility of the event; it has been actually witnessed, in the resurrection of Christ; it has been announced to us, by competent and truthful men.

We believe in the constancy, or ordained course of nature. But we believe, too, that in her vast sweep she embraces immeasurably more than falls within the personal experience of any one individual. Suppose a man were to wake into mature existence here on a summer's day, and after experiencing the course of nature for one month should be informed that a mighty change is approaching,—that this green vegetable creation will disappear, that the flowing streams will become solid, that the earth will be robed with a white mantle, that all nature will assume a new aspect. He replies, This is incredible;—it is contradicted by all my experience; it is entirely out of the course of nature.

Let another man come into similar existence in the month of January, and, after experiencing the course of nature for one month, be informed that a mysterious power will soon go forth to renew the face of the earth,—that every fountain and stream will be unlocked, that the face of nature will put off her frown and smile with living green, that the atmosphere will be charged with the fragrance and melody of wakeful and rejoicing life in myriads of new and indescribable

forms. He replies,—It is incredible; my experience is all against it.

We have only to reply, in each case, Your experience is not *old* enough. When you have lived through a whole year, then and only then will you be competent to judge of nature's course in respect to the events of a year.

Now there are known events in the course of nature, such as eclipses, transits, and other changes, both terrestrial and celestial, which occur but once in *many* years—some but once in many *ages*—and hence the experience of no one man stretches over the line between them. Yet they come in the regular course of nature, as truly as do the annual seasons. To one understanding the science of nature, and living from the beginning of creation to this time, they would seem as truly in the course of nature, and as rationally to be expected, as do the successive seasons of the year. They only revolve around in larger circles than do the events of the year;—they come no less certainly, although less frequently.

There are yet other events, which come only once in the whole sweep of this world's history,—such as the creation, the calling of light and order out of darkness and confusion, the ordaining of the laws of vegetable and animal life. So also there are other events occurring only in the *end* of time, such as the resurrection of the dead, the conflagration of the world, the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory to judgment. To encourage the faith of those who had never experienced an autumn, God might cause a

little fruit to appear prematurely; and for a similar reason he raised Christ from the dead, as "the first fruits of them that sleep;" thus pointing us to the great harvest to be gathered at the end of the world.

To the vain sceptic, therefore, who argues that a general resurrection is out of nature's course, because out of his experience, we have only to say, Your experience is *too limited.* To judge soundly in this matter, you must have lived through the whole history of a world like this. To some angel, who has witnessed the origin, progress, and end of many worlds, it may seem as truly in the course of nature that men should be raised from the dead in the end of time, as it does to us that spring will succeed winter, and autumnal harvest the summer.

Profoundly considered, it is no more incredible that God should raise the dead, than it was that he should raise us from dust to what we now are; or than it is, that we should undergo that mighty change by which we return to dust again. It is only because we are familiar with these changes, that *they* seem credible. Suppose the resurrection of men from the dead were to take place daily before us, as does the event of death, the one would seem just as natural and easy as the other. Had we never had any experience of death in our world, the doctrine of a general death in the end of time would seem as strange and incredible as does now that of a general resurrection. In this view, every fair and logical mind must admit that no possible a priori incredibility exists of the contemplated event. Numerous events equally astonishing, equally indica-

tive of almighty power and goodness, are constantly passing before us. Cannot he who has *once* called us up from dust, call us again?

But you say, We were born into the world and matured in growth by a natural process of life. Very well; and what then? Is not this by a divine power equally magnificent with that required in the *other* resurrection? But think again:—Was not Adam formed a living man, outright, from the dust of the earth? The general re-creation of the dead in the end of the world, is but the antitype of this first creation. And have you the temerity to question the competency of the Almighty to this effect?

Cannot he who rolls the seasons round, producing those surprising changes by which life and death alternately come and go, in millions of forms, cause his resuscitating energy to pass over our sleeping dust? We are constantly discovering new powers in nature; and the more subtle, the more mighty. What so subtle as electricity, galvanism, magnetism, attraction? Yet these invisible agents, which seem to approximate to the nature of pure spirit, have almost omnipotent power over visible matter, to change it into new, etherial, glorious forms. The earth is ninety-five millions of miles from the sun, and yet an invisible power coming from that distant orb holds this stupendous sphere in abeyance, and rolls it through the heavens as with lightning speed. It is scientifically computed, that the power of the invisible agency called attraction, which the sun exerts upon the earth, is equal to that of a solid bar of iron ten miles in diameter, stretching all

the way from the sun to the earth. Thus we see that the universé is replete with invisible tremendous agencies, with which the Almighty Spirit operates. These agencies are all the servants of God;—they do as he bids them. As the psalmist says, he makes the swift winds his angels; the flaming fire—the flying lightnings—his ministers. And when that glorious morning shall come, it is only for him who garnished the heavens, and spake chaos into a world of living beauties, to issue the command, and the dust of the sleeping myriads shall be startled—it shall feel the resuscitating power of his mighty agencies and come forth to new and dazzling forms of life.

So much for natural science. But the Scriptures alone can establish this doctrine. To them let us now appeal.

II. THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES. The corner stone of this great doctrine was laid in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the body of Christ did actually put off the slumbers of death, forsake the tomb, and assume a celestial and immortal form, then all those scriptures which assert that *we shall be raised like him* are *invincible proof* of our doctrine. They *cannot possibly* be interpreted in a metaphorical sense; they *must* teach a *literal resurrection.* As literal as was the resurrection of *Christ, so* literal must *ours* be. Else, farewell forever to all logical argumentation;—welcome the dark dominion of imagination, fiction, and infidelity. Let us see then how divine logic argues this point. "For I delivered unto you first of all," says St. Paul to the Corinthian Christians, "that which

I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen by Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."* "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some of you that there is no resurrection of the dead. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." The apostle proceeds to stake even the truth of the entire gospel on this event. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found also false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For, if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." In reply to the objection that the resurrection of the dead is unaccountable, the apostle says,—"But some will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do

* 1 Cor. xv.

they come? Thou fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." St. John, in his apocalyptic vision, "saw the dead, small and great, standing before God."*

As God is true, then, there will be a literal resurrection of the dead. It is no more certain that your mortal body will descend to the grave, than it is that it will rise from the grave immortalized. No matter if your dust slumber in the coral beds of ocean, or be washed by its waves round the globe, or borne to the opposite poles by the winds of heaven, or petrified into marble; no matter if it have entered into the composition of a thousand bodies;—the almighty power of Christ will make it hear his voice, and give forth its

* Rev. xx. 12.

various forms of immortal life, adapted to the immortal spirits whose probation it subserved. The doctrine rests on no shadowy speculations; its foundation is the everlasting word of God. I believe it, as much as I believe that God lives, and that the Bible is his book. And when this mortal tenement lies wasting on its death-couch, and the hungry grave is waiting for its victim, not a single doubt shall enter my mind but that this body, which I sow in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption—but that this seed, which I plant in death and dishonor, shall spring up all living and glorious in my Saviour's likeness.

Let us indulge a few concluding thoughts.

The solemnity of the resurrection is greatly enhanced by the fact that it will be *universal.* Not one of all the sons and daughters of Adam will be overlooked, or his dust forgotten. The infant of a span, who only saw the light and perished from the arms of its weeping parent, not less than the man of frosty locks, who descended to the grave amid the lamentations of numerous children and grand-children; the humblest peasant, who was never known or wept beyond his own hamlet, not less than the royal monarch, on whose dust the tears of a kingdom have fallen—will be alike remembered. The multitudes who lived before the flood, and perished in its waters; the successive generations that have lived and died since; the eight hundred millions now on the globe; and all the nations yet unborn, down to the end of time—all will hear the voice of Christ, calling them from the long sleep of death. He calls them now with his grace, and many

will not hear ;—then, all *must* hear ! However downy death's pillow, or profound his slumbers, he shall resign his prey ;—the quickened body *must* go forth to Christ —to judgment ! All who ever opened their eyes on the light of time, will then open them on the light of eternity.

Christians will be raised first. Blessed are they that shall have part in the first resurrection.* They will be raised to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. They will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. They will be set as suns and stars in the firmament of God, to shine and rejoice forever. Their entire being will then be perfected in beauty, glory, bliss. What an amazing contrast to the death-bed scene ! And to the loathsomeness of the grave ! Immortal health will bloom on every countenance ; everlasting joy sparkle in every eye, and hang in rapture sweet on every lip.

How unlike this the resurrection of the wicked. " They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the *resurrection of damnation.*"† Awful words !—but the words of Christ himself. *The resurrection of damnation !* Who can fully understand this ? As the righteous will bear in their bodies the bright image of Christ, so the wicked will bear the dark image of Satan. They will rise to " shame and everlasting contempt." " So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man

* Rev. xx. 6. † John v. 29.

shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend them, and which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

We are here admonished to beware how we use our bodies, as well as our souls. As our bodies are to live hereafter, they too, as well as our souls, will have revenge upon us, if we abuse them. If we consecrate these bodies to God, as temples of the Holy Ghost, if we make them subservient to the Redeemer's will, with what rapturous joy will our spirits welcome them, as they come up all glorious from the dust, to receive them back again, and go forth to meet the King in beauty. But if we debase them to the service of sin, how appalling the reunion! The guilty spirit, that made the body sin, and the guilty body, that made the spirit sin, must now come together for mutual recrimination and *everlasting fellowship of wo!*

Finally, the morning of the resurrection, when it comes, will come very suddenly and gloriously. The preparation is gradual—the watches of the night seem to number tardily along—but when all is ready, the grand consummation will come as in a moment, like the flooding beams of the sun when he cuts the horizon. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the bidding of Christ, the archangel's trump will rend the trembling skies, send its terrific clangor through all the

* Matt. viii. 12.

chambers of the dead, and change the living. Now, the earth is rolling quietly on in its orbit, and its myriads of entombed children are slumbering unconsciously in its bosom. The next moment, it is convulsed, and land and ocean yield up their quickened dead. The rocky prisons, the marble shrines, the coral depths, instantly respond to the almighty voice. And now the burning breath of Jehovah goes up and envelopes the globe; the world is on fire; and heaven and earth mingle their roaring elements in a vast furnace of devouring flame! "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."* From their ashes will rise a world shining with the lustre of a new creation, and corresponding with the resurrection bodies. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Then will the Saviour's triumph be complete—his joy full. He will then have subdued the "last enemy,"† and have delivered all his friends forever from death's iron sway. Then will all that is mortal have put on immortality, all that is corruptible will have put on incorruption, and the blest voices of the redeemed will sing together with angelic powers, "O death, where is thy sting?—O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God,

* 2 Pet. iii. 10—13. † 1 Cor. xv. 26.

who hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Who would not live for such a consummation? Be this ever in our eye; and never may we forsake the path that leads to a glorious resurrection.

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* 1 Cor. xv. 55.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROOF OF THE JUDGMENT.

ALL nature proclaims that the affairs of this world are tending to a grand consummation. The human family is evidently a portion of a vast empire of intelligencies, sustaining relations to a government superior to this perishable earth, eternal in the heavens. The Almighty spake the earth into being, lifted the curtains of heaven and marshalled the shining hosts around it, and launched it forth in its orbit, to be peopled with a race of probationers for eternity, and having run its appointed circuit of ages, to present them at his judgment bar. For *this*, creation exists; towards this, the wheels of providence are rolling; and here will they arrive at the appointed time. The gospel must first be preached among all nations. Religion and science are to enlighten the earth, infidelity and idolatry to creep forth from their dark places and flee in disgrace. The head of the serpent is to be bruised, Eden to be restored, Zion to put on her beautiful garments, and all the ends of the earth to see the salvation of God. Then will follow the ushering in of the splendors and

triumphs of judgment. Then will appear the great white throne, and him that sitteth thereon, from whose face the earth and the heavens will flee away.* The dead, small and great, will stand before God, the sea give up the dead which are in it, death and the grave surrender all their captives, and the whole human family come forth to receive their doom. Then will come the end of this world. Having finished its appointed circuit of ages, and accomplished its great purpose, its last day will set, and the same Word that spake it into being will return it to whence it came. The angel will lift his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer.†

By the general judgment we understand an event, in which *the Almighty will assemble all the subjects of his moral government, and in the perfect light of truth and on principles of everlasting righteousness pronounce public and final sentence upon them.*

Respecting this great event men are prone to be sceptical. It has ever been the scorn of the atheist and the derision of the profane. Yet of all conceivable events, it is the last on which trifling becomes us. Every person must admit that such a judgment *may* await us;—and if it does, language is inadequate to express the magnitude and solemnity of our interest in the event. Let us then look seriously to it. My object now is to *notice the evidence* that such a judgment will actually take place. We find, on inquiry, that our moral

* Rev. xx. 11. † Rev. x. 6.

constitution, the moral government under which we exist, and the express teachings of the divine Word, all harmoniously proclaim it.

1. OUR MORAL CONSTITUTION. We are conscious of possessing the power to act responsibly. We know that we can do what we judge to be right or wrong. We thus know that we are *accountable* for our conduct, and are therefore liable to be called to account. A man may, for a few dark moments, *sin* himself out of this conviction, but *reason* himself out of it he cannot. Conscience, the faithful monitor, will lift up her strong voice and proclaim righteousness and a coming judgment. Even in the dark and reckless soul of the atheist she sometimes speaks, in language of terrible rebuke. In moments of peril the conviction darts like vivid lightning upon his mind, that he is about to fall into the hands of the living God to answer for the deeds of the body, and he instinctively calls to that God for mercy. Thus a single flash of immortality melts away his atheism in a moment, destroys all his sophistical arguments, gives victory to truth, and makes him tremble in anticipation of coming judgment. It has been demonstrated, in thousands of instances, that the most iron-hearted atheism is no proof against the instinctive admonitions of an awakened conscience. Her voice may be for a season drowned in the tumult of passion, or lost in the din of the busy world, but finally silenced she cannot be. After all the most labored attempts to prevent her, she will awake, will speak, will be heard, and will urge a resistless conviction upon the soul of every man, that he is an account-

able being, and must sooner or later be called to an account for his conduct.

2. THE EXISTENCE OF A MORAL GOVERNMENT. That there is a distinction between righteousness and sin, and that the Almighty has by the constitution of nature and by his providential dealings expressed his approbation of the one and his abhorrence of the other, it is impossible to deny. We are then the subjects of a moral government, and must therefore be brought into judgment.

But some undertake to say, that we receive all our rewards and punishments *as we go along*. They tell us that when they do right they feel commended, and when they do wrong they feel rebuked, and this they say is retribution enough for all the purposes of moral government. They hence infer, rashly, that the present state is a scene of final retributions. Their error lies in not distinguishing between the mere *tokens* and the *ultimate rewards* of moral government.

Suppose two pupils at school, the one studious and virtuous, the other idle and vicious: the one receives constant tokens of his master's approbation, and the other of his disapprobation, *as they go along*, but these are not the *ultimate rewards* of their different courses. When the years of their pupilage have passed, and they have left the school to go forth into the world, they receive the *rewards* of their former doings. The one is then blessed with a well disciplined mind, a virtuous character, a good education, an elevated rank in society; while the other is cursed with an idle and undisciplined mind, a vicious character, and a ruined

reputation. They had only *tokens*, by the way; now come their *rewards*. And these rewards are *permanent*.

So while we are passing through this scene of moral probation, God bestows the tokens of his approbation upon the obedient, and the tokens of his disapprobation upon the wicked, but these do not constitute our final rewards. Wisdom's way is pleasant, even in this life, for the smile of God is upon it; and the way of the transgressor is hard, for the frown of God is upon it; but the *final reward* of the one is everlasting glory, and that of the other is everlasting perdition.

It is then true that the good enjoy the present tokens of the divine favor in approving consciences and communion with God, from which the wicked are excluded; but that the righteous and the wicked are actually treated according to their respective deserts in this life, is farthest possible from truth. How often do the wicked prosper, spread themselves like a green bay tree, and fatten upon the spoils of the righteous. How often does iniquity, abhorred and condemned by God, but eluding the sanction of all human laws, accumulate wealth and power, abuse and insult innocence, and descend in pomp and luxury to the grave;—and how often does virtue, loved and approved by God, encounter trials, disappointments, and the loss of all things, and go down to the grave in sorrow and reproach. Is *this* the way the righteous Governor of the universe rewards his subjects? It were blasphemous to think it. The thorny paths, the conflicts, the martyrdoms of the faithful—the bitter tears, the home-

less wanderings in dens and caves of the earth, of those of whom the world is not worthy—what shall we say of them? There is no solution of the problem but in the admission that the present is a period of *probation*, whose rewards lie in a future and mature state of our being, when what is now dark will be made manifest, what is now crooked be made straight, and all men will actually receive according to their deserts, as meeted out to them upon principles of everlasting righteousness. With great beauty and force did the psalmist disclose this sentiment. There was a time when his heart sunk within him, on beholding the prosperity of the wicked and the reverses of the righteous. He was sorely puzzled to reconcile these facts with the principles of a righteous moral government. "I was envious," he says, "at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them as a shield, violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither, and waters of a full cup are wrung out of them. And they say, How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and

washed my hands in innocence; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But let us observe how this saint was cured of his folly. "When I thought to know this," he says, "it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."* Now witness the triumph of his faith, as his eye lights on the retributions awaiting the righteous in eternity. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." The same sentiment was taught by Christ. "Son," says the father of the faithful to a lost spirit in eternity, who had received and abused great gifts on the earth, "remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented."† As much as to say, That was a period of probation, this of retribution; no longer treated as probationers, you have now entered upon a state of endless retributions.

It thus appears, that both our own mental constitution, and the moral government under which we exist, clearly indicate a righteous judgment to come.

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* Ps. lxxiii. † Luke xvi. 24.

3. THE SACRED SCRIPTURES. The reason given by the apostle why God calls all men every where to repent is, "because he *hath appointed a day* in the which he will *judge the world in righteousness.*"* Here we are divinely taught, that God has appointed a particular day, or period, when he will administer a righteous judgment upon all the world. The same Scripture proceeds to say, that this judgment will be administered by Jesus Christ. And Christ himself proclaimed the same fact. In the 25th chapter of Matthew he says, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle writes, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we *shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then *every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*"†

In the Epistle to the Corinthians we are thus admonished,—"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God.*"‡ Again the same apostle writes, "Wherefore

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* Acts xvii. 31. † Rom. xiv. 10, 11. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

we labor, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."* To the same judgment day does St. Peter point us, as an event to take place at the destruction of the world by fire:— "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire *against the day of judgment*, and perdition of ungodly men."† In the Epistle of Jude, we are informed that Enoch, the holy man of old who walked with God and was not, for God took him, was inspired to preach of this judgment day. The record of his preaching we have not, but the fact that he did announce a judgment day is divinely asserted. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to *execute judgment* upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."‡ In the book of Ecclesiastes, the wise preacher concludes his discourse thus, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall *bring every work into judgment*, with every secret thing, whether it be good or

* 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. † 2 Peter iii. 7. ‡ Jude 14, 15.

whether it be evil."* St. John had a vision of this judgment, and he thus describes it:—"And I *saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,* from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and *the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*"†

Important facts respecting this judgment must be deferred to the next chapter. In the meantime be it settled in our minds, as a revealed doctrine, that this world is to pass through the trying ordeal of a great judgment day. However strange, awful, or even incredible it may seem, still it is divinely taught, and will surely come. Our own ears are to hear the piercing blast of the trumpet-call, our own eyes to see the splendors of that flaming morning, and of that great white throne, from which the heavens and earth will flee away. Our own feet must stand before the enthroned Judge, our own hearts palpitate, as we wait in breathless suspense the decision of Him on whose lips hang our everlasting destiny. To prepare for that event, is the great end of life. Any aim below this, is below our duty, and will lead to disappointment and sorrow. A sentence of approval in the judgment day, God has set before us, as the goal to which we should all run—the great and commanding object of our pur-

* Eccl. xii. 14. † Rev. xx. 11, 12.

suit;—to fail of this, is to lose our probation, forfeit the divine favor, and sink into the woes of a ruined eternity. Be it then our great absorbing thought, through our whole life, that we are bound to a righteous judgment, and are moving swift as time towards it. Even while I write, preparation for it is making—our characters are forming, the holy moments of our probation are numbering on, the recording angel is preparing the books to be opened.

O how solemn, how precious, reader, are these hours of your probation! How amazing the interests staked upon them! Seize them as they pass;—and from this time be it your great aim in life to prepare to meet your God in judgment.

CHAPTER XVII.

FACTS OF THE JUDGMENT.

In the previous chapter we have considered the evidence of a coming judgment. We have seen that our own moral constitution, the moral government under which we exist, and the explicit teachings of the Scriptures, all conspire to announce it. Some important inquiries concerning it remain to be noticed.

1. *When* is this judgment to take place? I answer, *immediately upon the conflagration of the world.* As the preparation for the judgment will not have been fully made till the last inch of time has run out, and all human probation is at an end, so any delay beyond that period would be uncalled for and inconsistent with the divine promise. "The Lord is not *slack* concerning his promise."* There will not be a moment's delay after all is ready. The judgment will therefore come at the end of time. At the instant time shall cease to be, will the judgment of souls for eternity commence. The dead will first be raised; the right-

* 2 Peter iii. 9.

eous with shining forms, and the wicked clothed with shame, as in anticipation of their respective dooms. The consuming fires will then be let loose upon the earth, and will wrap it in the flames of a devouring furnace. The earth and all the works therein will be burned up. Then will the judgment set, and the Judge will be seen in glorious majesty on his throne of luminous cloud. I announce the time and order of these events as they are revealed in the word of God. St. Peter informs us that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the *heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*"* He had just said, "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, *reserved unto fire against the day of judgment.*" But before the judgment sets the dead must be raised. "I saw the *dead*, small and great," says the revelator, "stand before God."† The order of events will therefore be, first the resurrection of the dead, then the dissolution of the world by fire, and then the judgment. All this gross materialism will be swept out of the way, to give place to the majestic throne and the judicial proceedings of that day. "I saw a great white throne," says the revelator, "and him that sat on it, *from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.*"‡ Nothing will remain to engage the eye, or occupy the mind; every eye must look

* 2 Peter iii. 10. † Rev. xx. 12. ‡ Rev. xx. 11.

upon the enthroned Judge, every mind be absorbed with the awful decisions.

2. *Where* will the judgment be? It cannot be on this earth, for the earth will be "burned up."* It will not be in heaven, for the wicked are not allowed to enter the gate of that holy kingdom.† It will not be in hell, for only condemned spirits enter that place of punishment.‡ It remains, therefore, that the judgment will set in the mid-heavens, between the abodes of the righteous and of the wicked, whence the judged will be sent to the one or to the other, according to their respective sentences. The wicked will thence be banished "from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power,"‖ to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. The righteous will ascend in shining clouds with their Lord into the ethereal mansions of glory, where they will be forever with him. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."§ We shall inhabit "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."¶ The solid pavement of the earth will not be required to support the feet of the myriads thronging to judg-

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* 2 Peter iii. 10. † Rev. xxi. 27. ‡ Matt. xxv. 46.
‖ 2 Thes. i. 9. § 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. ¶ 2 Cor. v. 1.

ment, for as the dead will be raised and the living changed to *spiritual* bodies, not subject to the laws of gravitation, they will be able to move and rest, like forms of light, in open space. Hence there will be no obstruction to the full vision and burning presence of the Judge ;—every eye shall see him, every knee bow to his throne.

3. Who will be the *Judge?* Jesus Christ. "We must all appear before the *judgment seat of Christ.*"* Nor will he judge by proxy, as some suppose ;—for he has told us that *he himself* will come seated on a glorious throne, and all the nations of the world will be assembled before *him.* St. Peter in one of his sermons says, that after Christ rose from the dead "he commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is *he* which was ordained of God, *to be the Judge* of quick and dead."† St. Paul also, in one of his discourses, says, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness *by that man whom he hath ordained,* whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."‡ The same who was raised from the dead will then be the Judge of the world. And again, in his Epistle to the Romans,—"We shall all stand *before the judgment seat of* CHRIST."‖ As the divinity of Christ has been often denied, and divine honors withheld from him, he has admonished us, "The Father judgeth no man but

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* 2 Cor. v. 10. † Acts x. 42. ‡ Acts xvii. 31.
‖ Rom. xiv. 10.

*hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men might honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."**

It is thus unequivocally taught in the word of God, that Jesus Christ will be the Judge of the world. This is a most important and interesting truth. He who once came to redeem, will then come to judge. But oh! how changed! Never again can his Godhead be questioned—never again will divine homage be withheld from him. Before, a helpless babe in the manger, now a glorious Judge on the throne;—before, a man of sorrows, now over all God, blessed forever;—before, arraigned at Pilate's bar, now Pilate is arraigned at his bar;—before, he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, now all souls must fall before him, and every mouth be stopped. Amazing contrast! Oh how the God now shines forth, in that human form. With what stupendous honors is humanity clothed!

4. How *extensive* will the judgment be? It will be *universal*, including all mankind and fallen angels. The Scriptures are quite explicit on this point. "We must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ."† "EVERY eye shall see him,—*every* tongue shall confess to him."‡ "He will judge the WORLD in righteousness"—all mankind.‖ "*Every one* of us shall give account of himself to God."§ "And the *angels* which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."¶

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* John v. 22. † 2 Cor. v. 10. ‡ Phil. ii. 11. ‖ Acts xvii. 31. § Rom. xiv. 12. ¶ Jude 6.

None of all the teeming myriads of immortals, that have inhabited the earth since creation's dawn, nor any of the fallen spirits of darkness, will be able to escape that ordeal. No marble shall hold its dust, no ocean-cave its prisoner, no deep cavern its fear-stricken tenant, and no chains of darkness their guilty victims, that they should not come forth to judgment. Although they call to the rocks and to the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, the rocks and the mountains will not know their call, for a mightier voice will have reached them. Fleeing like autumnal leaves before a tempest, they will leave no refuge from the blazing brightness of the great white throne ;—all—all—from earth and hell, must stand before it. There are many things in the future, which we may possibly escape. Even death, one of the most common events, some have escaped, and many others will ; but none can escape the judgment.

5. *How much of our conduct will be brought to light* in the judgment? We reply, there will be a *complete developement of character.*

"Judge nothing before the time," says the apostle, "until the Lord come, who both *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.*"* "There is nothing covered," says Jesus Christ, "that *shall not be revealed,* and hid, that *shall not be known.*"† At human tribunals, facts are often suppressed, evidence kept back,

* 1 Cor. iv. 5. † Matt. x. 26.

and only a partial developement obtained. It will not be so at the judgment seat of Christ. The entire character and deserts of every individual will fully appear.

But it is unnecessary to suppose that all the actions of every person, will be made known to every other person ;—this would suppose a knowledge in the creature little less than infinite. All that is necessary to answer the ends of the judgment is, that every person be made clearly to see his own character, and also that of those with whom he has had to do. Those who have known most of each other, and had most to do with each other, on earth, will know most of each other and have most to do with each other in the judgment. Parents and children, pastors and people, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, neighbors, associates, will approach nearest and be made most fully acquainted with each other's hidden things of darkness. Especially those who have done most to help us in the way to heaven or to hell, including good angels who have succored and *fallen* spirits who have tempted us, will come under direct notice. So that every one will see, when judgment is pronounced upon himself or upon others, that it is righteous.

It may seem incredible that one at the judgment can be put in full possession of his past conduct, so much of it being forgotten ;—but we know that the mind under powerful pressure, as in peril of instant death, discovers a surprising ability to recall its past history. At such moments, thousands of things, long forgotten, rush like a torrent upon the mind. The awful judg-

ment throne will awake the dormant energies of mind to such vivid excitement, that all its accountable actions will stare it in the face, as though literally written down with burning letters by the finger of God.

There is a material called sympathetic ink, whose written letters do not appear, until the paper is held by the fire. So the flaming presence of the judgment throne will recall and develope all forgotten and concealed deeds.

Nor is it incredible, that the same Being, who knows how to bring a man's conduct to light to himself, knows also how to bring it to light to others;—he can even make every man his own witness. He can make the guilt or the innocence darken or shine in his face; he can make his heart as manifest as a sunbeam. He can write the character of every man, like that of Cain, in his forehead. Every man who has injured me, in thought or deed, present or behind my back, and every man who has done me good, I shall then perfectly know—his deeds shall all come fully before me—and receive the reward of my everlasting frown or favor, sustained by the decisions of his own conscience and of his great Judge. So will it be with every other person at the judgment.

6. *On what principles* will the judgment proceed? The Scriptures inform us that the decisions of the judgment will respect our measure of light. "That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done."

The degree of light sinned against will determine the degree of guilt. They who have sinned without

the written law, and only against the law of nature, will be judged accordingly. The heathen, who never received the gospel, will not be judged by the gospel; the only question respecting them will be, How they treated the light they received. If saved, they must indeed be saved by the grace of the gospel, through the repentance indicated by the light of nature. If lost, they will not be condemned for rejecting the gospel, but for sinning against the teachings and refusing the repentance indicated by their own consciences and the course of divine providence."*

We who have received the gospel, shall be judged mainly by our treatment of the gospel; and on this will finally turn our everlasting destiny. The final question respecting us in the judgment will not be, whether we have sinned against the divine law—which we all have,—nor yet whether we have sinned against the gospel—which also we all have—but whether we have *complied with the gospel overtures.* Have we that repentance towards God and faith in Christ, which unites the soul to its Saviour and clothes it with his righteousness? This will be the great question. Though our sins be as scarlet, we shall be found white as snow, if we have that faith in Christ which works by love and purifies the heart. He that *believeth*, shall be saved; and he that believeth *not*, shall be damned.

7. What *position* does this judgment hold as a judicial transaction?

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* Rom. i. 20.

We reply, the position of a *final* judgment. It is the highest court of the universe, and from it there can be no appeal. He who is found righteous here, is righteous forever; he who is found guilty here, is guilty forever. The character has been formed and proved, the probation spent, the moral position of every soul taken;—the evidence has all appeared, the Judge is omniscient, all-wise, and all-righteous;—another and more favorable trial is impossible. Hence, beyond this judgment and forever, he that is filthy is filthy still, and he that is righteous is righteous still. The wicked shall go thence into *everlasting* punishment, and the righteous into *everlasting* life.

We have thus answered, scripturally, the most important inquiries involved in this great event.

A few concluding thoughts. The interest which each of us has in this judgment is strictly spiritual and personal. It is not the blast of the trumpet, the conflagration of the world, the approach of thronging myriads to judgment, the fleeing away of heaven and earth, that will most engage our attention. It is the all-engrossing and terrific thought that we are about to appear in the presence of our Judge, to receive our everlasting destiny. To the wicked, what a day of consternation, of conviction irresistible, of terror, and anguish! To the righteous, what a day of exultation and triumph! They will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

This judgment will also effect a stupendous change in the *relative* conditions of men. The last will be

first, and the first last. The distinctions of wealth, rank, office, family, fame, will be swept away. In respect to these, all mankind will be brought upon the same level. From that level, they will rise or sink, as they shall be found righteous or wicked. Happiness and misery, no longer falling indiscriminately like rain as in this world, all the misery will concentrate upon the wicked and descend with them to the place prepared for the devil and his angels; all the happiness will concentrate upon the righteous, and ascend with them to heaven, where "the tabernacle of God will be with them, and they shall be his people."

Finally, how powerful the motives to repentance presented by this subject. Indeed it is on the strength of this subject that God *commands* it. He "commandeth all men every where to repent, *because* he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness." As faithfully as God has foretold us of the glorious benediction of the righteous at this judgment, so faithfully has he also forewarned us of the dreadful doom of impenitent sinners. Found in your sins, you cannot stand in that judgment;—you will surely fall, never again to rise. In vain will you then lift your longing eyes towards heaven, and the crown of glory; in vain will you mourn the folly of wasted probation;—ages on ages will roll over you, and lose themselves in the awful deeps of eternity, but they will bring with them no change in your wretched condition—not a gleam of light to revive your wearied eye, not a ray of hope to cheer your despairing spirits.

To find favor in that judgment, IS ETERNITY SAVED; to be condemned in that judgment, IS ETERNITY LOST!

May God in his infinite mercy prepare us all for it, and to him shall be the glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

THE righteous at the judgment will be received into everlasting favor with God. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* This will be the final benediction of the King, pronounced upon all the faithful from his glorious judgment throne.

"Come," says the enthroned King;—come to my heart, my confidence, my kingdom—where I am in my glory, there shall you be. "Ye blessed of my Father;"—not dependent on the blessing of man or angel, ye are blessed of God himself. "Inherit;"—favored heirs to an inheritance, ye are now to be put in possession. Of what? A "kingdom;"—and one "prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Let us contemplate this heavenly reward in its elements. It includes,

1. FULL COMMUNION WITH GOD. They are invited to "*come*" to God. They are to dwell in his

* Matt. xxv. 34.

presence, behold his glory, participate in his bliss. They are to have his entire *confidence*;—they have been proved and found faithful. They are to have his cordial *fellowship*;—God has tested their attachment, and is not ashamed to own them as his. They are to have his *happiness*;—the very joys that thrill the bosom of the infinite Father, are to become theirs. The curse of exclusion and exile is repealed, the cherubim and flaming sword are removed, and the ransomed spirits return joyfully to inviting and blooming paradise. God himself will be with them, and will be their God.* Henceforth no frowning barrier shall rise, intercepting the free and sweet communion of the created with the uncreated Spirit;—the soul finds its home, its rest, in the bosom of its God.

2. COMPLETE EXEMPTION FROM SIN. "*We shall be like him,*" says the apostle, "for we shall see him as he is."† Our being like Christ, cannot mean that we shall partake of his natural attributes—his omnipotence, omnipresence, &c.; but that we shall be like him in *character*. Seeing the Saviour as he is, will banish all that remains of sin, transform the entire moral nature, and cause the ransomed spirit to shine in the unsullied beauties of holiness. Christians on earth hungered and thirsted after righteousness; now they are filled. "They shall walk with me *in white*," says Christ, "for they are worthy."‡ Accordingly the revelator, describing the holy and blissful state of the righteous, utters the voice of a great multitude, as the

* Rev. xxi. 3. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Rev. iii. 4.

voice of many waters and of mighty thunderings, saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, *clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.*"* Not a profane or unbelieving thought, not a covetous or impure desire, not an unhallowed affection, will ever again alarm the conscience or disturb the sweet and hallowed tranquillity of the soul. In sinless, angelic beauty will the righteous forever shine, as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever. Oh how changed! Here sin was their constant and mortal foe. It lurked beneath their fairest virtues, it tarnished their brightest deeds, it embittered their sweetest pleasures. It rendered life little else than a scene of conflict, of watching, and of grievous repentings. Now all these are over. The victory is won;—the crown sparkles on the conqueror's brow;—and with a joy known only to a spirit that has come out of great tribulation, and been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, does he sing the battles ended and the storms past.

3. COMPLETE EXEMPTION FROM SUFFERING. All the *causes* of suffering, to which they were here subject, are removed. Sin, these mortal bodies, disappointments, griefs, bereavements, find no admission in heaven. "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he

* Rev. xix. 8.

will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."* Everlasting adieu to all the pangs of mortality, all the anxieties, sorrows, woes, which here held them in relentless vassalage and followed them down to the grave. There, in that glorious world, the righteous will contemplate with rapturous delight all toil ended, all struggles over, all perils past, all tears wiped away, and the healthful and joyous activity of all their powers forever.

The transformation of these bodies from corruptible to incorruptible, will be a mighty leap in bliss. Here we are in literal bondage to the flesh. We groan being burdened, not that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up in life. "There is a *spiritual* body."† Cheering truth to the spirit groaning under the ills of mortality. See that shining form, as it rises from the dust and ascends to meet its Lord in the air. It rises not from its cold bed maimed, diseased, enfeebled;—all traces of mortality and decay are removed;—the bright blush of the resurrection morning has lighted on that face, and immortal beauty sits smiling there. The kindling eye sweeps the broad field of its vision, and revels unre-

* Rev. xxi. 3—5. † 1 Cor. xv. 44.

strained, unimpaired, over the amplitude of Jehovah's works. We can hardly decide whether poetic beauty or enchanting truth hold pre-eminence in the inspired representation of the righteous entering the heavenly rest:—"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

4. CONGENIAL POSITION. Although the most essential part of heaven is within us, yet circumstances have their importance. Gabriel might be placed in such circumstances as to mar his joy, and Jesus Christ himself has been placed in such. Hence the Scriptures are careful to inform us, that the righteous will hereafter not only have the elements of heaven within them, but that they will also be placed in such *circumstances* as shall contribute to the highest measure of bliss. They will be placed in such relations to God, to his law, to angels, to their fellow beings, and to all other objects, as shall harmonize with the holy and large desires of their hearts. They will be where the glory of God shines with its most resplendent lustre. One whose eye was privileged to behold heaven describes it thus:—"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory

* Rev. vii. 14—17.

of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."* "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,"—how delightful then to the Christian, to live in the blaze of such a sun as this! Again the revelator says, "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

They are to be where the *law* of God shines out in peerless beauty and reigns in all the majesty of undisputed dominion. They will be associated with none other than holy angels and saints cleansed in atoning blood. "And there shall in no wise enter into it *any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*"†

Even the *inanimate* creation of the heavenly regions is represented under the most resplendent and magnificent of all imagery. The gates of pearl, the golden streets, the chrystal fountains, the verdant fields, the polished jasper; the thrones, and crowns, and harps;—all these *mean* something. Nor can we, without violating the laws of interpretation, understand them to mean less than that all the objects with which the righteous are surrounded and put in relation, are in the highest degree delightful and glorious. There the quickened eye rolls its vision over worlds forever bright, where suns never set, nor clouds gather, nor tempests sigh; where all the laws of nature, chiming sweetly

* Rev. xxi. 23—25. † Rev. xxi. 27.

with the laws of grace, agree to minister to the life and joy of the blessed inhabitants.

5. A MOST EXALTED SERVICE. Heaven will not be a place of idleness. In his description of it the revelator says, "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall *serve him.* And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."* Again he says, "They are before the throne of God, and *serve* him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."†

Christ has taught us that the righteous will hereafter even participate with him in the government of the universe. "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, *ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelves tribes of Israel.*"‡ Again he says, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation, and *I appoint unto you a kingdom,* as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom *and sit on thrones.*"‖ "Him that overcometh," he says again, "will I make *a pillar* in the temple of my God;"§—and again, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." And yet again he says, "They shall *reign* forever and ever."¶ Now this cannot signify less, than that the righteous are here-

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* Rev. xxii. 4. † Rev. vii. 15. ‡ Matt. xix. 28. ‖ Luke xxii. 28—30.
§ Rev. iii. 12—21. ¶ Rev. xxii. 5.

after to be received into most intimate sympathy and fellowship with the Almighty in his governmental proceedings.

It is true, the saints in heaven are said to *rest*;—but it is not the dull and senseless rest of *inertia*. It is the rest of God;—ceaseless action, without weariness. All their immortal energies are plied harmoniously with his, to roll on the purposes of his infinite benevolence. And what an honor, what a privilege, to be associated with God in the benevolent and lofty work of controlling and blessing the intelligent universe.

6. VERY GLORIOUS WORSHIP. Imagine the subjects of a great and good monarch, who have proved their allegiance and been taken into special favor by their sovereign, privileged with assembling on occasions from all parts of the realm to make joyful demonstrations of their homage and receive special tokens of royal favor. Such jubilees are to be kept in heaven around the throne of God. The inspired descriptions of these celestial jubilees baffle human composition, and are therefore best given in the language of the Bible itself. Isaiah, whose vision pierced the veil and saw the worship of the heavenly world, thus describes it. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings. With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord

of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory."* St. John informs us that he beheld a door opened in heaven, and that he was invited to ascend and witness scenes there. He saw Jehovah enthroned in glory, he saw the righteous clothed in white raiment, with crowns of gold on their heads, "and the living beings in the midst of the throne and round about the throne rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when they give glory, and honor, and thanks, to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns at his feet, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."†

St. Paul tells us that when he was caught up to the third heaven, he heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. He heard such bold and burning language expressive of joy and praise, as would be improper for mortal lips.‡ That the numbers who will assemble at the heavenly jubilees will be immense beyond computation, gathered from all quarters, and that their worship will be the most exalted and joyful imaginable, is placed beyond a question by the following developement. "I beheld, and lo a *great multitude which no man could number*, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,

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* Isaiah vi. 1—3. † Rev. iv. ‡ 2 Cor. xii. 2.

stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the living beings, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto God forever and ever, Amen."*

They who have felt the holy joys of Christian worship on earth, who have realized the seraphic kindlings of the spirit when in the assembly of the saints it pours itself forth in devout praise to God and the Lamb, have some conception of the exalted bliss of the heavenly worship.

7. ALL THESE BLESSINGS ARE TO CONTINUE FOREVER. It is the misery of all earthly blessings, that they so soon forsake us. Indeed the more valuable they are, the more pain they give us, by the consideration that we must so soon lose them. We are afraid to love any thing here, lest it should soon cause our hearts to bleed. O for friendships that never fail, for treasures that never forsake us, for worthy objects on which our affections may rest confidently, joyfully, and forever. Well, the righteous shall have them. There is a realm which mortality has not invaded—a realm where morning brightens not to give place to the shadows of evening—where beauty blooms not to fade—

* Rev. vii.

where hopes spring not up to droop and die. There the heavens are not arched with the glorious rainbow of promise to-day, to be rent with storms to-morrow; whatever of riches, and friendships, and glories the righteous inherit when they cross the threshold of heaven, are theirs forever.

Such, then, are the blessings awaiting Christians on the decisions of the judgment day. If they seem too great to anticipate, think of the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross, and consider that they are the purchase of his blood. Well might faith stagger beneath this massive and eternal glory, if we must think of it as something which our own works are to merit. But when we think of it as the just expression of the Saviour's worth—as the joy that was set before him when he endured the cross—our faith rallies, and is enabled to grapple with and sustain the mighty anticipation. And this should be its daily employment. It cannot be better employed than in anticipating the eternal rewards of the righteous. This will purify our hearts, strengthen us to endure trials, raise us above the world, make us constant and persevering in the Christian life, and finally give us victory over the grave.

CHAPTER XIX.

REWARD OF THE WICKED.

Jesus Christ has set the doom of the wicked at the judgment day in direct contrast with the reward of the righteous. He has thus divided the human family into two great classes, the one class on the right hand—a position indicating exaltation and bliss; and the other class on the left hand—a position indicating disgrace and misery. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

Having in the preceding chapter contemplated the retribution of the former, we must now fulfil the less pleasing task of contemplating that of the latter. If any are in doubt whether there will be any wicked at the judgment day, and any perdition beyond it, we have here no controversy with such, but hand them over to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Their controversy is with him, not us. Let such be reminded, however, that there is, as a matter of fact, such a thing as a blessed

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* Matt. xxv. 41.

and such a thing as a wretched *moral condition*, and that the soul is often so conditioned that the universe seems to it robed in light or in sackcloth. There is a condition in which all is sunny, green, charming; there is another, in which everlasting darkness, desolation, and gloom hold dominion. Not all the infidelity in the world, not all the speculations about divine mercy, can make the one condition the same as the other. It is so in the natural world, and so it is in the moral. Nor can any man show that religion does not conduct to the one of these conditions, and sin to the other. Jesus Christ has taught us that they actually do; and until a wiser than he comes, we shall abide by his teaching.

Assuming, then, as divinely taught truth, that a portion of mankind will be found in their sins at the judgment day, and be consigned to perdition, let us inquire what the Scriptures teach us respecting the nature of that perdition.

Contemplated in its elements, it embraces the following particulars.

1. BANISHMENT FROM GOD. The Judge says to them, "*Depart.*" Blessed, said Jesus, are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. There is then a condition in which the divine presence is delightfully manifest—in which the glory of God is seen, realized, rejoiced in. From this the wicked will be exiled. As that heart-withering word, *Depart!* falls on their ears, they will cast a melancholy look upon the crowns and thrones of heaven, which they have lost. Farewell to those glories! They see the righteous there, safely

arrived and joyfully welcomed to their home;—the songs of praise die on their ears, and the splendors of the golden city fade on their vision, as they sink away in anguish to the black abyss!

2. ENTIRE ABANDONMENT TO SIN. In this world, they are ever more or less under the restraints of grace. Sin is not here permitted to act itself fully out. Even the *most* abandoned, are not *utterly* abandoned. But we can have some conception of the horrible condition of abandonment, from the case of those who are far gone in sin. It is not our painful lot often to witness those seeming incarnations of all that is morally vile and fiendish; yet they are sometimes placed in our way, to illustrate the nature and the end of sin. If the condition of man far gone in sin, is so cursed, even while grace still holds him in her restraining arms, how cursed must he be, when the great Judge shall have said to him, in language that sunders the last bonds of grace, "*Depart ye cursed!*"

3. THE FULL SUFFERINGS OF SIN. The wicked will be utterly abandoned to the *sufferings* which sin inflicts. In this world divine mercy steps in and averts a large portion of the misery which sin tends to produce. No man can tell, therefore, to what miseries his sins would lead, but for interposing mercy. If he sins against his flesh, mercy hastens to heal the wound sin has made, and to arrest its work of pain. If he sins against his conscience, mercy instantly offers the cordial of forgiveness. Hence we never in this life see a full developement of sin, as an instrument of producing misery.

Yet do we not see enough to make us start back from it with horror? Sin diseases the spirit; it perverts the affections;—and under its full dominion, those merciless tormentors, anger, malice, envy, ungratified desire, mortified pride, reign uncontrolled.

We all know that a diseased or deranged state of nature's elements produces frightful destruction. It causes the atmosphere, the universal minister of life, to become the minister of death to all living things. It converts the ocean to flaming fire; it explodes the world. Disease or derangement in our bodies, may be the occasion of instant death, or of sufferings as prolonged as life. But of all God's works, none is made with such delicate skill as the immortal soul;—and the more delicate the object, the greater the misery of its abuse. There is more pain in a diseased eye, than in a coarser organ. For the same reason there is more pain in the spirit, when diseased, than in a physical member. Under the disease of sin, the soul's affections are out of harmony with the eternal laws and relations of its being. That soul was made to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Sin dethrones God from the heart, perverts the will, and introduces a lawless anarchy. In the soul of the abandoned sinner, this anarchy yields its entire measure of unalloyed wo.

Then there is the pain of *remorse*. It is by many supposed that this will be the principal suffering of the lost sinner. Perhaps no agony is more intolerable. A wounded spirit who can bear? It has no apology, excuse, or mitigation, from within; no compassion,

from without. The sufferer is his own destroyer, his own accuser, his own tormentor.

The sinner will not only depart, and depart accursed, but into "*fire.*" This language may be figurative, but we are to remember that figurative language has a meaning, that no scriptural figure is unimportant or intended to be thrown away; and that, consequently, when Christ warns us of the quenchless fires of hell, he designs to admonish us that there is that to the lost soul in hell, which natural fire is to the body;—that there is a *spiritual* fire, or fire *in the spirit*, which is never quenched. What can this be, if it be not the burning, withering sensation of those accumulated tormentors which gather about a defeated, fallen, abandoned spirit, and a remorseful conscience?

4. A MISERABLE SOCIAL AND RELATIVE STATE. The place to which the wicked will be exiled, is that prepared for the devil and his angels. And the revelator describes it as a place of dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* The power of the social principle, for good or for evil, for happiness or for misery, is very great. By being placed in the relation of proximity, companionship, community of interests, men may immeasurably increase their mutual welfare or wo. As the bliss of heaven, on the one hand, will thus be greatly augmented, so will the misery of hell, on the other. The wicked derive some pleasure from association here, but they will not be

* Rev. xxii. 15.

able so to do hereafter. In hell they will meet, not as cheered on in their impious ways with gratified desires and bright anticipations, but as defeated, fallen, miserable beings, to criminate each other's guilty agency and augment each other's wo.

How intolerable to souls in perdition must be the eye of that ruined being near them, who, but for their guilty agency, might have been in heaven. How appalling for sinners who have been instrumental in each other's ruin, to meet each other, recognize and be recognized as mutual destroyers, and be compelled to spend their eternity together helpers of each other's misery, as they had been helpers of each other's sin.

The Scriptures represent not only the *society*, but all the *objects* to which the wicked will hereafter be put in relation, as ministering to their misery. Darkness, prisons, chains, fire and brimstone, the undying worm, are among the terrible agents which the Holy Ghost has selected as ministering to the woes of the wicked. It would seem, then, that all the laws and elements of nature, as well as those of the moral world, will be charged with a dreadful commission respecting them. They will all be charged to dry up every source of delight, and open on their souls the streams of avenging justice. No longer will their eyes be permitted to look forth upon smiling fields, and bright suns, and enchanting prospects;—no longer will they luxuriate on the bounties of indulgent heaven;—no longer will they walk at large, and call themselves the world's freemen;—of all this a sad reverse will come! Nature will be hung in blackness; creation will have

lost every charm; heaven will have withheld every blessing, and the fires of perdition will have consumed the last drop of happiness in their wretched hearts.

5. LOSS OF THE APPROBATION OF ALL GOOD BEINGS. There is a principle in man, which gives him pleasure when he gains the approbation of the wise and good, and corresponding pain when he forfeits it. This is a mighty principle in moral government, and on none does the Almighty seem more to rely. So strongly did the psalmist feel its power, that he said to him, "Thy favor is life, thy loving kindness is better than life." It is the operation of this principle, that has ever made considerate men prize the approbation and deprecate the displeasure of God above all other things. The lost sinner will see, in the judgment day, that he has forfeited the approbation of God; and as beyond that decisive day the judgment of God will become the judgment of all good beings, he will also have lost *their* approbation. He will thus become an alien and outcast from all good society. His allotment will be with dogs and sorcerers and every description of ruined character. Were he permitted to wander up and down the universe, he would never find a solitary good being to take him by the hand and bestow upon him a smile of complacent love. He will thus be compelled to feel, wherever he may go, that he is lost to the universe, and that the universe is lost to him!

6. ALL THIS TO LAST FOREVER. The crowning wo of the wicked will be its *immortality*. The thought that it will never end, will fill up the cup of despair. We can endure almost any misery, however intense,

for a few moments;—but even a moderate pain, continued for days and months, becomes intolerable. What then must be the feelings of the lost soul, when he reflects that the miseries of his condition will never—never—end! Could he look forward to the remotest period which imagination can reach, and descry the least gleam of hope, there would be some alleviation—at least a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. But no—all in prospect is midnight darkness.

"Deep horrors fill his dismal home,
And hope shall never enter there!"

Here we stop. While fidelity commands us to say all that is revealed, wisdom forbids us to say more. On *such* a theme, our words should be few, cautious, and well chosen. For aught that we know, we may be describing our own doom. At any rate, we are describing the doom of human beings—beings allied to us by all the tender ties of a common nature—and beings whose welfare or wo ought to be as dear to us as our own.

But there are some words of improvement furnished by this subject, which must not be lost.

The subject shows us the dreadful evil of sin. There are two ways by which, principally, we learn the evil of sin;—the one, by looking at the cross of Christ, the other, by looking at the woes of perdition. The Bible directs us to both. The one reminds us what sin *has* done and *would* do; the other, what it *will* do. Sin *has* made the Son of God exceedingly miserable; it *will* make the impenitent sinner not less miserable.

Nor can this dreadful misery of the lost sinner be referred to any *other* cause than sin;—not to any lack of benevolence in God, for the bowels of his compassion yearned towards all, and would have saved them, had they conformed to the principles of righteous government;—not to any defect in the divine law, for it is holy, and just, and good;—not to any limitation in the atonement, for it was ample for the world;—not to want of opportunity, for every lost soul in perdition had it. All the woes of perdition are then the sole work of sin. But for his sinning, and that too against the greatest of mercies, every lost spirit in perdition might have risen on angel-wing, and sung the raptures of cherubim and seraphim.

We thus learn how we ought to regard the perdition of the wicked. Many consider it a hard feature in the divine government, and would even keep it out of view through fear of impugning the character of God. But suppose a great and good sovereign, has instituted the best of governments, and done all, as a righteous king, to secure the allegiance and happiness of his subjects. Yet some of them do and will rebel, and thus involve themselves in ruin. How should we feel towards that sovereign, in view of this? And how ought we to feel towards God, in view of the ruin which men bring on themselves by sin? How would you feel towards an excellent parent, who, having done every thing for his children, is at last pained to see some of them destroy themselves by misdoing? Instead of rebuking him, would not your feelings be those of deep, tender, solemn sympathy? Did we view this subject right,

instead of murmuring, we should feel as did Christ when he lifted his streaming eyes to heaven over wicked and doomed Jerusalem.

This subject also teaches us, that it is the first duty and highest wisdom of every man to do all in his power to deliver his soul from perdition. The apathy of men on this point, even under color of reason, is amazing. How many are rushing on blindly, as though no harm could possibly await them; while others deliberately calculate on the mercy of God to save them, do as they may. All this, in face of the blazing admonitions and reiterated warnings of God himself. Such is the horrible infatuation of sin.

If ever I forget that I am soon to die and appear before God in judgment, and if the danger of then appearing on the left hand ever ceases from my mind, may the Holy Ghost cause those words of Jesus, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire," to ring in my ears as the knell of death;—may peace forsake my conscience; may friends and the world cease to afford me a single solace; may I find no rest for my soul, but in a penitential surrender to the Saviour. My earthly plans, and gains, and losses, even my choicest earthly friendships, I may forget; but the everlasting retributions of the judgment day, *I must not forget!* For them I live—to them I hasten on the wings of every moment—and soon, for good or for evil, they must be mine forever. What are all things else to me, compared with these? I can afford to suffer earthly losses, pains, trials, but how can I afford to endure the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels? Who

shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall inhabit everlasting burnings?

Reader! May God of his mercy send the salutary fear of perdition into your hearts—may you be led to inquire, with wakeful solicitude, what you must do to be saved. And from this hour, so long as you live, may all your thoughts, plans, and actions, be directed to escaping the bitter pains of the second death and securing a throne of glorious immortality in heaven.

CHAPTER XX.

SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES.

THE Christian doctrines, like all God's other works, present a complete and symmetrical *system*. Each part is correlate to every other, and all together form a compact and glorious building, whose foundation is Christ.

There are two ways of presenting divine truth;—the one analytical—illustrating each part separately;—the other synthetical—presenting the whole in connection. Having exhibited the *parts*, we now propose to exhibit the *whole*. Having examined the several portions of the structure, let us put them together, and see the building complete. I have thought it best to do this, even at the expense of some repetition;—so important it is, that the mind clearly apprehend these doctrines, and so much assisted it is in so doing, by viewing them in their relations to each other, as well as separately.

The SYSTEM of doctrines at which we arrive, then, called technically the "evangelical," is summarily the following:—

The universe is not an accident, but the work of a living and intelligent BEING, called GOD;—a Being, self-existent, eternal, unchangeable, almighty, infinite in wisdom, goodness, justice.

This glorious Being exists as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;—as Father he is moral Governor, as Son Mediator, as Holy Ghost Sanctifier. In each of these Persons he is the same divine Essence.

The Father being at the head of moral government, the Son is officially subject to the Father. In his deity, Christ is in all attributes infinite; in his official capacity, in all things subject to the Father; in his humanity, in all respects a perfect man.

The Holy Ghost is also a distinct Agent of the Godhead, sustaining a personal office under the Son in the work of human renovation.

God has thrown from his creating hand not only worlds of matter, and vegetables, and animals, but also an immense kingdom of *accountable minds*, over which he administers a righteous *moral government.*

Under this government all the obedient attain to a glorious immortality. They become heirs and companions of God; they walk with him in white on the fields of eternity, delighting in his perfections, sympathizing in his benevolence, rejoicing in his reign, enjoying his works, reflecting his glory. Annihilate the moral system, and God would exist in everlasting solitude, having none to bear his image, enjoy his character, reflect his brightness;—the higher orders of irrational instinct would be the nearest approach to him. The towering ranks of holy beings in the heavenly

worlds, the ever expanding oceans of moral beauty and blessedness that roll through the ages of eternity, would cease to be.

The system of moral government, therefore, yields infinite glory to God and blessedness to his universe. But sin has invaded it, and introduced an immense evil. This has come of the malvolition of a portion of the free minds of the moral system, not of any fault in the divine government. We are to regard sin not as that which God prefers to holiness in its place, but as that which he prefers to the non-existence of the moral system. So that while the decrees of God extend to all events, he does not decree sin in the *same sense* in which he does holiness; for while the former is from eternity an object of his aversion, the latter is an object of his delight.

The divine decrees compel none to sin, exclude no sinner on probation from salvation, and militate not against the sincerity of God's invitations and commands to all men. Hence the existence of sin is no evidence against the goodness of God, while at the same time it is not an evil that has started up and taken him by surprise, seeing he has from eternity anticipated it and laid the plan of his government accordingly. There is no fortuity with him; for his kingdom is from eternity to eternity, all lying within the grasp of his infinite mind.

God administers not only a moral but a *providential* government—his providential, sustaining to his moral government the relation of means to an end. Hence God's providential government is to be regarded as a

system of measures or doings on his part to secure the ends of his moral government. Creating and controling the material elements; causing the events of life, health, prosperity, affliction, sickness, death; providing atonement for sin, sabbaths, Bibles, a preached gospel; granting the gifts of the Spirit, in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the renovation of men—all these belong to providential government, of which Jesus Christ has the control. "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." "*All power*," said Christ, "*is given unto me* in heaven and on the earth." As the providential government is thus laid "upon his shoulders," by him the world is managed, by him this race of sinners is placed under an economy of grace, by him an atonement has been made, by him the gift of the Spirit procured, by him all grace and blessings come to men; and consequently all availing prayer must be offered in his name and for his sake.

A portion of God's moral subjects, including some angels and the entire human race, have become involved in sin. Instigated by a fallen spirit, our progenitors fell, and by some unrevealed mode of consequence, all their posterity are a race of sinners. Not that they are guilty for the sins of Adam and Eve; not that they are born into the world actual transgressors before they act; not that they do not retain entire powers of moral agency; not that all become equally

sinful, or any in this life as sinful as they can be; not that they are destitute of noble constitutional qualities; but that their first and continued moral disposition is not the love to God which the law demands, but the reverse; that they are thus destitute of holiness, at variance with the divine government, so that there is none righteous, no, not one. They have all gone out of the way—the world lieth in sin.

Instead, however, of descending upon men with the fires of deserved wrath, God has come in the subduing compassion of the cross of Christ, at once opening a way for the penitent to return and inviting the repentance of all; sustaining unimpaired the authority of the legal administration, while yet placing mankind under a dispensation of grace. The Christian atonement is thus the brightest conceivable display of the divine glory. It is God calling on men, on angels, to behold how inflexible is his justice, yet how great his compassion; how determined he is to sustain his law, yet how unwilling that men should perish. Here mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other, and the glory of the divine character shines as the sun when he walketh in brightness. Here it is we pause and exclaim, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!* Take from the gospel the atonement, and it is no longer the gospel.

A portion of mankind are brought to repentance and induced to accept of this atonement. This is the fruit of God's eternal, electing grace. While God does for all, in the way of reclaiming grace, what he sees to be

wise ; he does no more for any. So that while his election is according to the good pleasure of his will, his will is yet under the direction of infinite wisdom and benevolence. Every good being must surely respond to this, Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.

The revolution of character by which men become new creatures in Christ Jesus, is called regeneration, or being born again. This is a change in moral disposition, from the love of sin to the love of holiness, from unbelief to faith, from the dominion of Satan to the service of God. Before this change, its subject resisted the divine government, now he submits to it; before, he was impenitent, now, he is penitent ; before, he was self-righteous, now, he depends alone on grace ; before, Christ was by him lightly esteemed, now, he is to him the chief among ten thousands ; before, his face was set towards perdition, now, it is set towards heaven. He is a new creature ;—old things have passed away, all things have become new. He realizes a new and exalted happiness—the happiness of sins forgiven, peaceful conscience, communion with heaven, and hopes full of immortality. His eye kindles with new lustre, his heart thrills with new animation. The eternal God is now his refuge, and underneath him are the everlasting arms. He is spiritually a child of God and an heir of glory.

All who are thus renewed, or effectually called, are also *justified*. This is a justification of grace. It does not denote personal righteousness, but that the relation of the subject to the law is now such that he is no

longer exposed to its penalty. No man is justified on the ground of obedience to the law, for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified," nor yet on the ground of repentance, for repentance can neither remove past transgression nor make adequate expression of its evil. Evangelical justification proceeds only upon the ground of the redemption wrought out for us by Christ. "We are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." It is passed upon men when they are renewed or effectually called. "Whom he called, them he also justified." It is conditioned on faith. "Being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

All who are thus renewed and justified, are also *adopted*. Adoption goes farther than justification;—the one being a governmental, the other a paternal act. Justification restores the transgressor to the law, adoption restores him to the heart and arms of his heavenly Father. Adoption confers all the exalted privileges of a child of God, making its subject an heir of God and a joint heir through Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

All the renewed, justified, and adopted, will *persevere* unto eternal life. Not that holiness is in itself invincible, for it has been overcome in the case of Adam and some angels, not that there is any perseverance independently of divine grace, nor yet that Christians do not often falter in duty and walk in darkness, but that they never utterly fall from the gracious state. It is contradictory to the analogy of nature, that God should commence such a work and leave it

unfinished—that he should renew souls to his image, sprinkle the blood of redemption upon them, seal them heirs of grace, give them to Christ as fruits of his sufferings, and then let them drop from his hands into perdition. All real Christians, therefore, persevere in the divine life; and their perseverance is the evidence of the genuineness of their conversion. Through good report and through evil, through smiles and through frowns; through mercies and through chastisements; through numerous alternations of hope, fear, joy, despondence, by that faith which overcomes the world, they press forward, till they drop the flesh and enter upon the new and exalted mode of being, like that of the angels. Their souls, not dormant till the resurrection, are in a state of conscious, active, happy existence—all darkness, conflict, weeping and despondence are left behind; only light, triumph, joy unspeakable and full of glory, are present and in prospect.

While a portion of mankind thus return to God by Christ, a portion persist in sin to their ruin. This they do, not because God would have them, or does not do enough on his part to prevent them, but because, in the emphatic language of the Scriptures, they *will die!* In a chosen course of impiety they go on, faithless, prayerless, impenitent, through the combined influences of Bibles, sabbaths, sermons, prayers, the Holy Spirit; through providential mercies, chastisements, warnings, till they sin away their day of grace and drop into the grave. Their souls, not dormant till the resurrection, are in a state of conscious and active existence, receiving the due reward of their sins. Hav-

ing passed into the hands of justice, justice takes her course with them.

Analogous to the general course of nature, this world will run out its course and have an end. The Son of God will then be revealed from heaven in great power, as the resurrection and the life. Victorious over death and the grave, he will call to the dead with a mighty voice—a voice louder than seven thunders rending and quaking the earth, and all that are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth. Death can no longer hold them in his cold embrace, for God Almighty calls. The deep silence of the grave will be broken, the slumbers of ages will have an end.

We are not to suppose that the identical particles which constituted the entombed body, will be brought together in the same mode to constitute the resurrection-body ;—for it was sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body. But an important relation is to exist between these bodies which have been devoted to sin or to righteousness, and our future spiritual bodies, pertinently represented in the Scriptures under the analogy of the death and resurrection of the vegetable kingdom ; which relation will be recognized, when the souls of all the dead shall be clothed upon with spiritual and immortal bodies.

Jesus Christ will then appear on his judgment throne. The blaze of his glory will consume the world ;—from his face heaven and earth will flee away ; the dead, small and great, will stand before him, and every creature will pass the solemn ordeal of a righteous judgment. The records of the divine

Mind will be opened, every man's character will come to light and receive a just reward. They who have by repentance and the fruits of holiness secured a saving interest in Christ, will be welcomed to heaven with the plaudit, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The impenitent will receive the sentence of banishment, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The separation thus made between the righteous and the wicked, will be *eternal!* The sentence of the supreme court of the universe is irrevocable, and *from it there can be no appeal.* Between heaven and hell there is a great gulf fixed, over which there is no passing. He that is righteous will be righteous still, and he that is holy will be holy still.

Other ages and prospects will then open. The righteous will have left behind them all their sorrows, the wicked all their pleasures. While the wicked are experiencing the dreadful retributions of sin in the bitter pains of the second death, the righteous are enjoying the bliss of that heavenly state in which God wipes away all tears from their eyes, and there is no more sorrow nor pain, for the former things have passed away.

All is over. The history of this world is ended. The harvest is past; the fruits of the earth are gathered into the kingdoms of everlasting retribution.

Such is summarily the system of doctrine, as we understand it, revealed in the sacred Scriptures. It is a perfect system, although it may not at first view so appear on the face of the Bible. So it is in nature.

The promiscuous gatherings of land and water, of rocks and hills, and of the shining orbs above, do not at first seem to promise any system; but the study of a Newton and a La Place has resolved the whole into a system complete and beautiful in all its parts. So the faithful study of the Scriptures discloses a beautiful and harmonious system of revealed truth. These doctrines all agree with each other;—if one is true, all are true. Take one away, and all fall. Deny the deity of Christ, and atonement, justification by faith, the entire scheme of redemption, falls to the ground. Deny human depravity, and where is regeneration, adoption, sanctification, the distinction between the righteous and the wicked? Deny the sovereignty of God, and where is the foundation for repentance, faith, perseverance, hope? Embrace any one of these great elemental doctrines of Christianity, and hold it firm in its integrity, and soon you see all the correlate doctrines gathering around it and forming a perfect and harmonious whole.

And the great lesson which they unite to teach, in tones of infinite authority, is this, that to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man:*—Thus do, and whatever else you lose, you will gain the great object of life—you will glorify and enjoy God forever.

Thus does this moral system, like the physical system of the universe, rise in strength and beauty before us, lifting our minds to the same source and directing them to the same glorious end.

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* Eccl. xii. 13.

CHAPTER XXI.

PROOF OF THE SYSTEM.

HAVING considered the proof of each doctrine separately, let us now consider their proof as a whole.

1. THEY HARMONIZE WITH EACH OTHER. Harmony is the law of truth; disagreement the law of error. Bring a score of truthful witnesses to testify on any subject, and their stories will all agree together. Thus each becomes a witness for all the rest, while they all together become witnesses for each. On the other hand, bring a score of *false* witnesses to testify, and their stories will be a perfect Babel. Each becomes a witness *against* all the rest, while they all together become witnesses against each. It were therefore an infinite impossibility to frame a system of false doctrines, on so profound and difficult a subject as religion, to harmonize together. Hence the entire harmony of the evangelical system makes each doctrine a witness for all the others, and all together witnesses for each one;—just as each stone in an arch helps to support every other stone in it, while the arch as a whole supports all its parts. Now if the proof of each

doctrine is conclusive, viewed separately, how invincible the proof of them when viewed as a harmonious whole.

2. THEY HARMONIZE WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE. They are responded by the deep voice of creation, and by all the movements of providence. The whispers of every passing hour declare them true. Bishop Butler, in his invincible Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion, has set this argument above the reach of scepticism. If the teachings of nature and providence can be relied upon, if the testimonies of experience are genuine, then these doctrines are true. They accord with *facts* in the history of the world, with which we are all daily conversant. The more we investigate the laws and operations of nature and providence, the more apparent it is, that all the natural sciences, all the teachings of inductive philosophy, and all the truths of Christianity, pour their united tribute into this same chrystal stream ;—the river of God rolling onward with majestic and ever swelling tide to everlasting ages.

3. THEY HARMONIZE WITH THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE. It was by the manifestation of these very truths, that the apostles, both in their lives and teachings, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. From the earliest records of history down to this hour, these doctrines have evinced a moral omnipotence over the human conscience. They have shaken down the firmest scepticism; they have subdued hearts of steel; they have made many a haughty Felix to tremble on his throne. Men that

could face the thunders of human eloquence, could not stand before these doctrines. Preach to a man the doctrine of depravity, and he feels, he knows, in his inmost soul, that it is true. Tell him he must have an almighty Saviour, or perish, and he cannot deny it. Show him the necessity of regeneration, and see it he must. Reason with him of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, just as these doctrines teach, and his trembling knees will indicate his irrepressible conviction of their truth. How manifest it is, that the same Being who made the human conscience, is the author of these truths, and that he designed the one for the other. How ill at ease are the consciences of men engaged in contending against them! Their restiveness betrays a secret conviction that they are in the wrong. But no sooner do they plant their feet on these doctrines, than they are conscious of standing on a rock;—they are then calm, firm, satisfied—their consciences bear them witness that they are then truly in the right.

4. THEY HARMONIZE WITH HUMAN NECESSITIES. They are precisely adapted to our moral wants. They impart an immense value to our existence; elevate us on the scale of being; awaken our energies to vast and enduring interests; disengage our hearts from perishing objects; unfold the benign character of God shining with the radiance of a sun; exhibit the perfection and strength of the divine government; expose the dark and malignant character of sin; cause us to hunger and thirst after righteousness; introduce our fainting spirits to an almighty Saviour; give stability

to heaven's throne, while it dispenses pardons to penitent sinners; afford us the exalted pleasures of communion with God; sustain us in trials, and arm us to successful conflict with temptations; afford us serene light and peaceful hope, as we walk amid the shadows of declining age, and the deeper shadows of the valley of death; open to our departing souls a real heaven of glories beyond the grave. Such is their tendency;—are they not then just what we need?

5. THEY ARE THE MOST OBVIOUS TEACHING OF GOD'S WORD. The plain, unlearned, wayfaring man, finds them on the face of the Bible; while also the profound German philologist declares without a doubt that the Bible teaches them;—and scepticism with him, if it exist, respects a point farther back—the inspiration itself of that book. And further still, those men who from prejudice, caste, false philosophy, or any other cause, repudiate these doctrines, usually acknowledge that many or all of them *appear* to be taught, but contend that they are so repugnant to reason, that other explanations must be sought;—hence their efforts are mostly directed to explaining away, rather than unfolding, the legitimate import of Scripture language. Going to the Bible without prejudice, and applying to it the same principles of interpretation which we do to other books, who can well doubt whether it really teaches depravity, atonement, regeneration, and all the distinguishing doctrines of the evangelical system?

6. THEIR CROWNING WITNESS IS IN THEIR FRUITS. We have spoken of their adaptation and tendency;—let us come to the *facts*. What have they actually

done? They have in every age, when faithfully exhibited, produced the same effects which the gospel did as preached by the apostles. Sweep a compass around the bright spots of our globe, and they shall be the very spots where these doctrines have obtained dominion.

They have done more to elevate and expand the human *intellect* than any other cause. They startle the mind by the boldness of their demands; they put it upon great and high thinking. The solemnity and pathos of their themes are well adapted to produce serious and noble intellects. The heathen mythology, which is a corruption of the true religion, did much for the Platos and Aristotles of ancient time, but these doctrines have done infinitely more. Immeasurably the largest proportion of the great original lights of our world—the minds foremost in enlarging, elucidating, and adorning science—have experienced more or less of their beneficial effects. Go to the largest libraries of the old world and of the new, and take down the most thorough standard books of Natural History, Ethics, Mathematics, Geology, Chemistry, Jurisprudence, Law, Medicine, Literature and Logic, Languages, Biblical researches and Hermeneutics—all those studies which liberalize and exalt the mind—and you find seven-eighths of them to have been written by men who owe very much of their strength and greatness of mind to the early and continued influence of these doctrines.

But it is mainly of their *moral* influence that we are here to speak. These doctrines produce serious views

of the responsibilities of life. The seriousness which they impart to the character is proverbial. Their views of eternal things—of the awful condition into which sin has brought us, and the more awful condition into which it *will* bring us, unless we forsake it; of what God has done and is doing for our salvation, and of the fearful and everlasting issues pendant on these fleeting moments—impart a solemn earnestness to believers of these doctrines which is proverbial. This fact identifies them with the religion of the Bible. The Bible is throughout a serious book. If what it teaches is true, the duties and issues of life are of too momentous a nature to be trifled with.

These doctrines have ever produced *deep and affecting views of sin.* They teach us that every sin is so great an evil, that it could be pardoned only by the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross;—that it is the unutterable grief and abhorrence of God's heart; the violation of a law of infinite excellence; the utter ruin of the soul; and, unatoned and unrepented, will certainly send its retributions of wo through eternity. It is even objected to these doctrines, that they unduly magnify the evil of sin;—but they place it in just the light in which Job, David, Paul, and all the saints on divine record viewed it. And until those records are expunged, which assert that the sacrifices of God are a broken heart—that the poor in spirit are blessed—that he who smites on his breast and cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is justified rather than he who thinks lightly of his sins—that he who cries out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me

from the body of this death," is the man to add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"—we are compelled to believe that the ruins of sin which these doctrines produce are the very views of God himself.

These doctrines produce the same *change of heart*, which attended apostolic ministrations. The preaching of the apostles produced deep and pungent convictions, anxieties, sudden revolutions of character, and great joy in believing. Sometimes thousands were thus born in a day. Some resisted, some cared for none of these things, while others yielded to conviction and experienced the benign transformation. This change was wrought at once. It was an instantaneous regeneration, such as we now witness under the ministration of these doctrines.

Look too at their reformatory *effects on morals*. Under their influence, the libertine becomes virtuous, the drunkard temperate, the prodigal a child of duty and prayer. And these effects are lasting as life. Under the ministration of these doctrines the most hardened profligate has been so changed as to become through all subsequent life an ornament of the Christian name.

Under the influence of these doctrines, *men are induced to consecrate themselves and all they have to the service of Christ*. This was one of the earliest and most decisive fruits of Christianity. The primitive disciples felt that they were not their own—that they had been bought with a price, and were bound to glorify God in their spirits and their bodies which were his. Hence their piety was characterized with great

self-devotion, decision, perseverance. It delighted in the worship of God, in the meeting for prayer, in the duties of the closet, and in labors for the salvation of men. It cherished deep solicitude and made vigorous efforts for the conversion of souls to Christ; it rejoiced over the repentance of sinners, with angelic joy;—it openly espoused the doctrines of grace, in the face of obloquy and reproach, and for the love it bore to Christ it took joyfully the spoiling of its goods and looked danger and martyrdom itself in the face.

All this is precisely what these doctrines have made men in every age. Who were the martyrs? What blood was that which flowed at Rome, at Lyons, at Paris, at Smithfield, for the testimony of Christ? The blood of men to whom these doctrines were dear as life.

Apostolic piety was a religion of *missions*. It sent missionaries to Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, France, Germany, Britain;—it was an earnest, diffusive, self-sacrificing, world-redeeming piety. This is the piety produced by these doctrines at the present time. Who are the men that live and labor for Christ? Who that give of their substance to spread the gospel? Who that are at this moment supporting missions to the Western wilderness, the Sandwich Islands, Africa, Ceylon, China, India, Persia, Greece, and every nation under heaven? They are men over whose hearts these doctrines hold dominion.

Finally, these doctrines, believed and obeyed, *enable men to meet death with joy*. There was something in the apostolic faith which made death more than

tolerable—more than welcome;—something, which made it unspeakable gain. To the apostles, this world, with all its attractions of wealth, pleasure, and friendship, had no charms compared with heaven. They longed to depart and be with Christ, which was far better. And so clearly did they read their title, in their all-justifying Saviour, that every doubt vanished, and the portals of glory opened on their vision unobscured with a single cloud.

It is granted that many other causes than evangelical Christianity may operate to make men resigned to die. Disease, pain, disappointment, losses, weariness of the world, mortified pride, curiosity to see the future, and a vague expectation of being better dealt with beyond the grave than they are here, often make irreligious men willing to leave the world. But this kind of willingness is totally another thing from that which is the privilege of the evangelical Christian. His almighty Saviour is with him. He feels, he knows the reality of the things in which he believes. It is with him no leap in the dark. He is calm indeed, but more than calm;—resigned, but more than resigned;—willing, but more than willing, to depart and be with Christ. His countenance is lighted with heaven's radiance; ineffable glory dawns on his soul. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he exclaims, "*I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;* thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Sometimes disease clouds the mind, but usually, where these doctrines are firmly and heartily embraced, not even disease is able to intercept the sensible com-

munion of the soul with God. Nor are they the weak and visionary who die thus. They are the strong and vigorous minds—persons of the last stamp to be deluded. St. Paul was no weak visionary. But he was a firm believer of these doctrines, and his dying words are, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand;—I have fought a good fight, *I have kept the faith; there is laid up for me a crown of glory.*" The dying Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold, *I see the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,* and prayed, Lord Jesus receive my spirit." The dying Payson said, "*The celestial city is full in my view,* its breezes fan me, its glories fill my eye." The dying Evarts said, "Wonderful, wonderful, *wonderful glory!*"

Such are specimens of the triumphant death of those whose hearts are under the dominion of these great doctrines. This is just what the gospel was designed to do. "He that believeth on me," said Christ, "*shall never die!*" Experimental faith in these doctrines turns death into life, wrests the spoil from the hands of the destroyer, and places the garland of victory and the crown of life on the dying sufferer's brow. This they have done for myriads, who before us have trodden the rugged paths of life to a happy immortality; this they will do for us, if we yield our hearts to their dominion; the same will they do for our children, and for unborn generations. By their fruits they are known. Their divine origin is proclaimed by what they have done and are doing.

Fear not, then, friends of truth ;—it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The kingdom of darkness is indeed strong ;—many are its devoted subjects ; many will continue such to their ruin ; but it is doomed to be cast out, to make room for the kingdom of Christ. Those who will not forsake it, and turn to Christ, must go down with it into eternity in their sins, and reap the bitter fruit of their misdoings.

In the mean time, the great cause of truth is in progress, and the faith of its friends is well sustained ;—for on yonder mount we behold the triumphant cross. For a little season the skies are robed in sackcloth, and the Father's face is concealed from the agonies of his beloved Son. But lo, a bow appears ! It is the bow of divine promise. Spreading upward its brilliant arch over the cross, it betokens God's everlasting covenant of grace, sealed with the blood of his Anointed. In that bow are reflected all the sweetly attempered glories for which Moses prayed—the victorious host of the Almighty, coming forth upon the world. The unnatural darkness retires ; clouds roll from the face of the sky ; the Redeemer ascends from the tomb ; and from his imperial throne he looks forth, the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings, upon all the nations.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

THE interest which every man has in the foregoing subjects is of the most personal and solemn nature. Our interest in all other subjects is secondary to this. Subjects relating to natural science, literature, mental philosophy, have their importance;—indeed they all bear indirectly on the truths of Christianity, as tending to elucidate, confirm, and enforce them. But the productions of La Plas, of Milton, of Locke, noble and valuable as they are, may yet be allowed to remain unknown, without seriously endangering your eternal welfare.

Not so the truths of Christianity. These take direct hold on the inner, the immortal life. These then are the truths, pre-eminently, for us to *think* upon—to ponder profoundly in our most serious and reflecting moments, and to write indelibly on our hearts. They are not truths for divines, or for particular sects, but for ALL men, of every name and calling. The man who neglects these truths, on any pretence, in-

flicts an injury on his deathless spirit which can never be retrieved. You may neglect algebra and geometry, if you please; but the Gospel of Jesus Christ you *must* not neglect, unless you would pay the forfeit in the life of your soul.

But let not your zeal for supposed truth degenerate to *bigotry*. I have endeavored to exhibit what I conceive to be a correct outline of Christian doctrines, still I am not to forget that wiser and better men have viewed some of them differently. I lay no claim to infallibility;—I have too painful a sense of the infirmities of both my intellect and my heart, to allow any approximation to such a claim. While truth itself is divine, the theology which endeavors to set it forth is human. Truth is always one; its imperfect vehicles are many. We have in religion the old school and the new, we have various theories of mental philosophy, we have the more liberal and the more severe orders of mind, all professing to be in earnest for the knowledge and defence of Christian truth. These facts should make us modest in respect to our own views, and charitable towards the views of others. They should keep our minds in an *inquiring* posture. True Christian faith is ever open-minded, and hungry for that truth by which it is so bountifully nourished; whereas bigotry shuts up the soul, and dooms it to perpetual starvation. It may not be a question whether the bigot or the infidel is in the greater danger, but ordinarily it is quite a question which is on the whole the more disagreeable character.

While on the one hand a saving faith may co-exist with various creeds, on the other hand the most rigid doctrines of the straightest sect may be pugnaciously maintained, without one jot or tittle of that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. The evidences of a saving faith are to be found, therefore, only in the life. Would you know whether in the eye of God you are a real believer or an infidel? The question is to be finally settled, not by referring to your creed, but to your spirit and conduct.

Are you of a meek and lowly mind? Have you brokenness and contrition of heart for sin? Do you hate all sin, seek deliverance from it, and hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you prize a clean heart, an approving conscience, and the smile of God, above all the riches and glories of the world? Do you habitually fear, reverence, love, and delight in God? Are your hopes of salvation founded solely on his grace in Jesus Christ?

For what *end* do you live?—Is it to glorify and enjoy God forever? Are your treasures on earth or in heaven? Does your mental eye sweep eternity, or is its vision bounded by the narrow limits of time?

Are you truly and impartially *benevolent?* Do you sincerely endeavor, by all your talents and opportunities, to render your fellow beings wiser, better, happier? Do you thus take the law of God for the rule of your life, and endeavor to apply it to all your actions, the most secret as well as the most open?

Are you submissive under trials and afflictions? Does confidence in God and love for his will dispose your heart to say, under all the chastisements of his rod, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight?" Do you love communion with God and seek his favor in prosperity, as well as in affliction, and is prayer your daily service and delight?

In your intercourse with men, are you conscientiously *ingenuous* and *honest?* Does truth always dwell upon your lips, and no slander ever lurk beneath your tongue? Do you make it your rule to "owe no man any thing, but to love one another." In short, are you living with a view to living with God forever in a world of holiness, striving for completeness of character, and aiming to be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect?

If you can respond affirmatively to these interrogatories, there is no doubt of the communion of your heart with those spiritual truths which I have endeavored to set forth. You may not hold them in the same technical forms—you and I may not be of precisely the same creed—but, if I am a Christian, we are of the same essential faith, as to the *sentiments of our hearts.* Christ certainly owns you, and so ought I;—for, as the excellent Robert Hall said, "What is good enough for Christ, is good enough for me." If we do not belong to the same church on earth, we will yet live in charity, and hope for everlasting fellowship in heaven.

On the other hand, unless yours are essentially the spirit and life above implied, no formal professions of

faith, however sound, can avail you. You are still at heart an unbeliever—in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. However earnestly you may profess to own Christ, it is certain that Christ does not own you. Whatever in the great day you may claim to have believed and done for Christ, will receive only the heart-withering reply, "*I never knew you; depart from me!*"

If you have read these pages, and are about to close the book, believing that the doctrines herein taught are essentially false, let me seriously ask, how you came by that belief? Was it by reading the Scriptures—by prayer—by patient study—by earnest striving, through self-denial, after holiness of heart and life? If it was, I must confess myself defeated, and here leave you, with my prayers and best wishes, till we meet at a higher tribunal.

If your opinion is the fruit of prejudice, or philosophical speculation, or any indulged adverse cause, let me ask you to read these pages once more, and with another spirit. They cannot harm you; they may yet serve to change your mind. Above all, go to the Word of God, with an earnestness of search and of prayer, to which you have hitherto been a stranger. In the mean time shall the prayer ascend from every faithful heart, that your eyes may be opened to behold the wonderous things out of God's law.

But do you close this book *admitting* the truth of these doctrines? Think what you admit. If these doctrines are true, you have an interest in them which

no language can express, and which eternity itself can never fully reveal. First of all secure that interest. Rest not till your heart has felt, and your life begun to exhibit, their transforming and saving power. Here is your first duty.

Do you incline to *defer* it, because it is a great and difficult work? It will be more so hereafter. Already deeply indebted to heaven's grace and justice, your debt is constantly becoming greater. Delay will only run you into deeper insolvency. Large as may be your present amount of sins, it will soon be larger. Hard as your heart is to-day, to-morrow it will be harder. If your sinful habits have already become almost invincible, they are in a way to become quite so. If grace must needs stoop very far to reach you now, it must stoop farther hereafter. Already you have lost the best time; but the present is all sun, and hope, and promise, compared with the future. Oh, what a dark cloud hangs over the postponement of duty!

Perhaps you cherish the too common presumption, that a dying bed will be more favorable for this duty than present circumstances, because of its nearness to eternity. Fatal delusion! Not one in a hundred expects to die, till he is too far gone to attend to his eternal interests;—all his thoughts and anxieties are expended on the disease and the remedy. And even if the dying sinner thinks of religion at all, it is an unhealthy effort—forced, feverish, spasmodic—from which an ingenuous and saving repentance is not ordinarily to be expected.

To say nothing of the fearful distance of an offended God from the dying sinner, if you know any thing of the laws of mind, and of the influence of disease upon it, can you think it a favorable hour for calm reflection and saving repentance, when racked and convulsed with pains?—when death stands shaking his gristly terrors at you—when an invisible and irresistible hand is felt pushing you off—when the enfeebled and wandering mind can scarcely collect itself to a single thought—when nature, overborne with disease, is sinking and swooning away, and the cold billows of death are dashing over you—oh! is *that* the hour, in which to do the great work of life?—the work of escaping perdition and securing the prize of immortal glory? You would hardly entrust it with a *temporal* interest. Our civil laws will scarcely admit a mere secular *Will*, that is made in those distracted moments;—and will you crowd into them the vast concerns of your immortality?

No. The bed of sickness and death is the last place favorable to preparation for heaven. Long before you reach it, the preparation should be thoroughly made—the mind and will renewed, every sin forsaken, the fruits of faith indicated in a holy life, your title to eternal glory clearly read, and nothing remaining but to lie down and sweetly breathe out your spirit to God. May such, *from this hour*, be the object of your life, and such, after many and happy years, your closing scene.

But perhaps you are already a professor of religion, having publicly signified your belief of these doctrines, and your only question now is, How you may best

commend them to the world, and assure yourself of a personal and saving faith in them. The answer is, Both these ends are to be gained by one and the same means—you must not only *profess* these doctrines, but *live* them. It is not by loud professions, not by thrusting your peculiar tenets into every man's face, not by much talking of any kind, that you are to honor your profession and secure for yourself the hope that is full of immortality. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven." Knowledge is nothing worth, doctrines and creeds are but dead names, faith itself is spurious and vain, except as they produce that *living charity*, which is but another name for a faithful devotedness to all the generous and self-sacrificing duties of Christianity. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity"—holy, living, active benevolence—"I am become as sounding brass, as a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

With the same spirit do the Scriptures every where admonish us, that the way to honor and enforce their sacred truths and secure a saving inheritance in them, is to make them live in our lives and shine in our ex-

ample. Only in the degree that we do this, may our hope of salvation rise towards assurance. The man who indulges an assurance of hope, on the strength of his professed creed, without holiness of life, is antinomian, insane, or idiotic.

It is only for those who, like the apostle, *practically* "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ"—who *actually* deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow him—that the signal tokens of divine favor are in reserve. Such are saluted on the way with the smile of God, so bright as to expel doubt and forbid corroding fear. They know that they are of God, because they do always the things that please him.

There is a generous forgetfulness of self, which characterises this stage of Christian growth. The object is not so much a hope of personal salvation, as the glory of God in the welfare of mankind. The soul is made over to God, with entire confidence in his grace, to be disposed of as he shall please. "He that findeth his life," said Christ, "shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." A serious doubt whether his salvation is secure does not disturb his peace, not because he is so dead, but because he is so self-devoted and so single-eyed to the divine glory. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Happy the Christian in such a case! He is neither perfect, nor a perfectionist. But he is an irresistible witness of the truths which we have endeavored to illustrate. How poor the delineation on paper, com-

pared with it as seen in the bright and living lines of such an example! It is one thing for a Christian to think himself already perfect, and quite another to have the full assurance of hope that he will be so hereafter. Never was Job more deeply convicted of being at a wide remove from sinless perfection, than when he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth,"—nor Paul, than when he said, "I know in whom I believe,"—nor Doddridge, than when he said, "I have no doubt of my being a child of God." Such Christians are at the farthest possible remove from perfectionism, while they are yet the most perfect of mortals, and have the full assurance of hope.

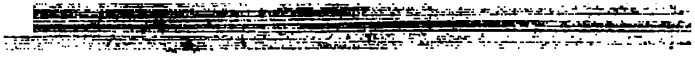
How beautiful, how sublime, are such characters! They are the stars that rule our night; the beacon-lights, ever shining on the brow of heaven, to point faithless mortals to higher worlds. They are invincible demonstrations of the benignly transforming power of the gospel. What a moral ascendency do they command over the world! What a resistless influence do they put forth, to enlighten darkness, disarm prejudice, silence infidelity, and restore the lost and the wandering to God.

Christians of this character, to vary the figure, are the moral giants of the earth. They are the picked and mighty men of heaven's anointing, to stand in the fore front of the battle of God Almighty, to achieve his victories in the earth;—not because they have more intellect, or wealth, or fame, than others, but because they have more of that *holiness*, which God delighteth to honor, to make the foolish things of the

world confound the wise, and the weak things of the world confound the mighty.

Here, then, may all professing Christians see at once their highest duty and noblest privilege. Such Christians we all *may* be—*should* be. It may not be practicable or desirable for all to turn professed preachers, or to write books in defence of Christian doctrines, but all may so preach and write these doctrines *by their lives*, as to throw every other exhibition of them far into the shade.

Such are the Christians which the church and the world greatly need. This momentous transition age imperiously demand them. Millions dead in sin imploringly call for them, by that grave-like silence which, to the benevolent mind, is scarcely less pathetic and appalling than the living tones of despair itself. They seem to say, We shall moulder in death forever, unless Christians seek our resurrection with the power of a holier life. And so it must be. Unless the laws of heaven and earth change, Zion's millennial age *cannot* come, without higher attainments of piety among her sons and daughters. Never, till they go forth with a more apostolic spirit, to challenge her rights, prepare her way, and herald her approach, *by a faithful exhibition of her doctrines in their lives*, will she arise in strength to spread the bright robes of her salvation over the nations.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. We are soon to see things in the light of eternity. This bustling world will vanish away like a dream, but there is a kingdom that will never vanish away.

Reader! secure your portion in that kingdom. Give *all diligence* to make your calling and election sure. And when these heavens and this earth shall be no more, when all the things that are seen and temporal shall be buried in the deep tomb of ages, may that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, be found to have been securely reserved for you in heaven.